

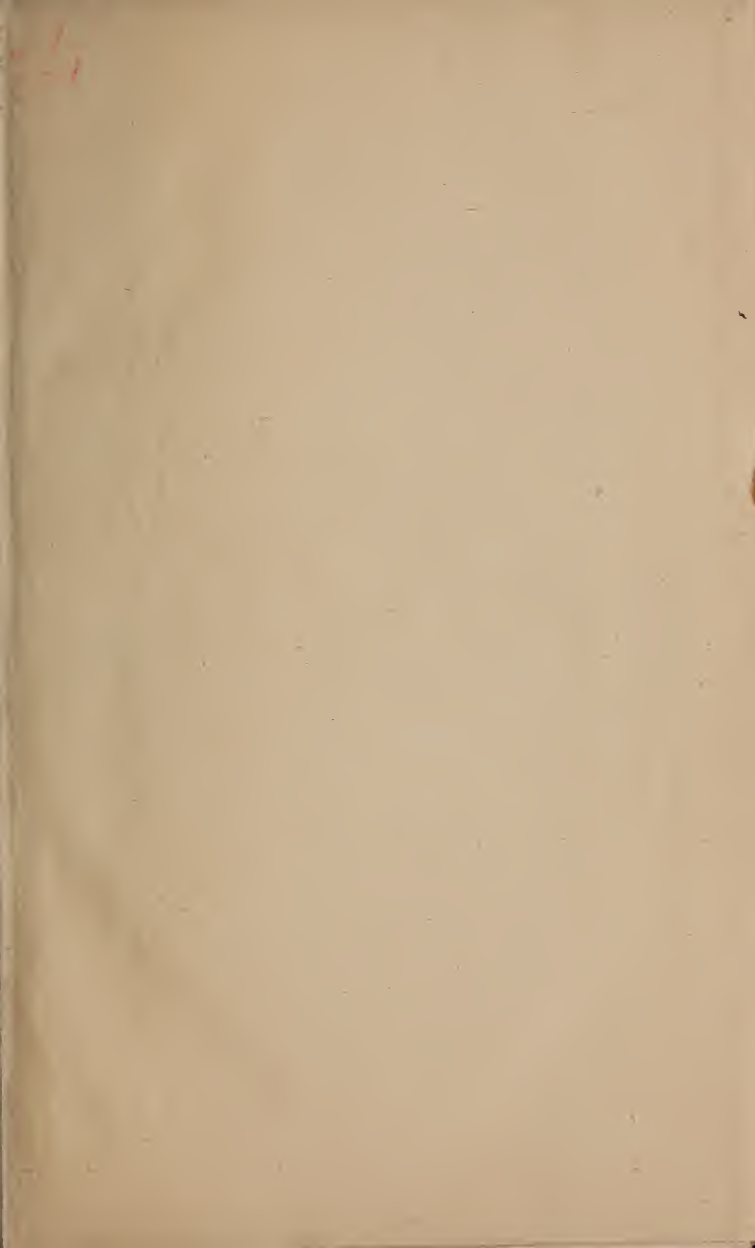


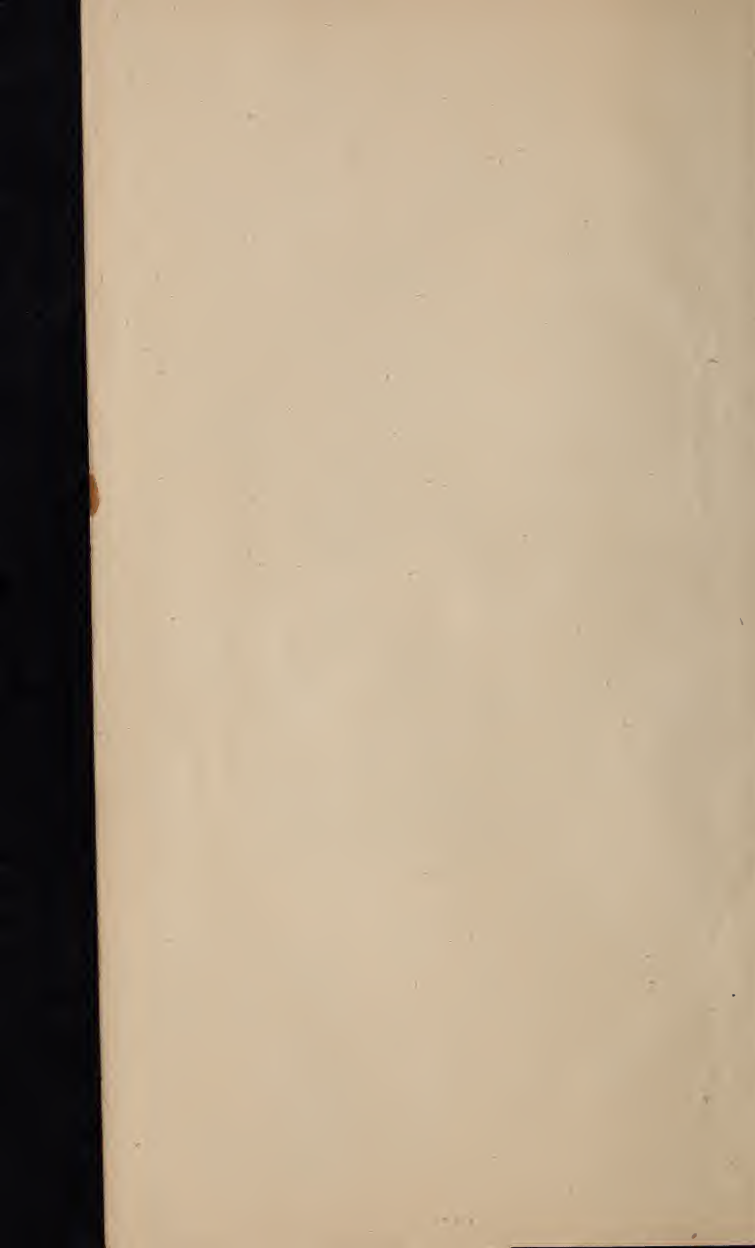
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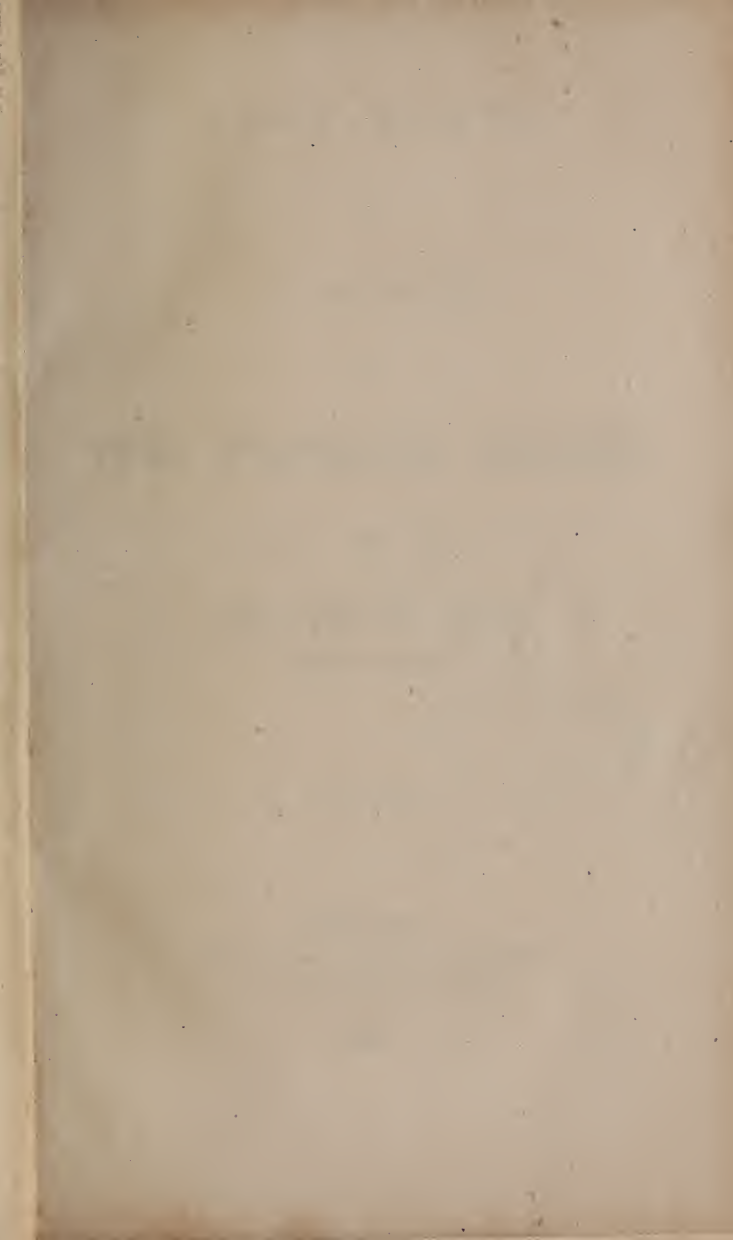
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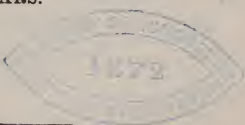
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LAST WORDS  
OF  
AN ADVOCATE  
OF  
PURE EVANGELICAL RELIGION,

BY  
BENJAMIN PARSONS,  
AGED 87 YEARS.



17

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WITH REFERENCE TO PAGES.

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## A SHORT PREFACE.

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The author does not expect that this book will be very interesting, or at all instructive, to the learned doctors of divinity, and the well-informed and devout Christian ministers and teachers of the Gospel; but if it shall meet the approbation of the numerous intelligent, common people (so called)—if it shall in any degree reach, improve, and meliorate the common mind, he will be well satisfied. The author expects and desires no profit or benefit, personally, from the publication; all he hopes or prays for, is, that it may be of some benefit and aid to the cause and spread of true, evangelical Christianity when he is no more *here*, which time he knows must soon arrive; and O that he may be prepared and resigned to go (when called for,) trusting entirely in the mercy of God for his forgiveness, acceptance, and approbation.

THE AUTHOR.

## THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

---

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."—Prov. xv. 3.

ALTHOUGH this text relates particularly to the omnipresence and omniscience of God, (which it is my design now mostly to consider,) yet as all his great and glorious attributes are intimately connected and divinely and harmoniously united, it may be useful briefly to notice, first, some other of his most important attributes. I will, therefore, with awe and wonder, briefly consider the almighty power and infinite wisdom of God. These may be considered as the foundation of all his other attributes. And they are necessary to each other, and to the whole galaxy of his glorious attributes—one would be useless without the other. Almighty power to execute, needs infinite wisdom to plan and arrange; and infinite wisdom to plan, would be defective without almighty power to direct. And God's justice, goodness and mercy would be deficient with-

out his almighty power and infinite wisdom to display them.

The almighty power and infinite wisdom of God are clearly and wonderfully seen and displayed in all his works and providence—in the creation of suns, moons, stars, worlds—with innumerable material accompaniments, and unnumbered creatures, both rational and irrational. All

“ These are thy glorious works ! Parent of good !  
Almighty ! Thine this universal frame—  
Thus wondrous fair ! Thyself how wondrous then !  
Unspeakable ! ”

But with more devotion and thankfulness, we may contemplate the unbounded, ineffable goodness, love and compassion of God toward us, his intelligent but sinful creatures. These should speak most powerfully to the heart, and animate every pious soul : they are displayed in various ways, at all times—in the creation of men in God’s own image, after his moral likeness ; making them intelligent beings, capable of worshiping, loving and serving him, and of loving and doing good to one another ; and in his creating this world, and all the useful creatures and things therein, for the use of men—making it capable of pro-



ducing everything necessary for our temporal support, comfort and happiness—in giving us richly all temporal good things to here enjoy.

But the goodness, love and compassion of God are infinitely more displayed by his sending his beloved, his only begotten Son, from the throne of his glory, from the bosom of his love, into this sinful world—here to reveal the benevolent, perfect character of his Father—here to teach, instruct and persuade sinners to repent and reform their lives ; to cease to do evil and learn to do well ; to set a perfect example for us to follow—living a sinless, perfectly holy life—going about continually doing good—healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, feeding the hungry, raising the dead to life, and performing many great and miraculous works of love and mercy.

He had so much pure, disinterested love to men, that though he had “all power in heaven and earth” given him, and could at any moment have overcome and destroyed all his enemies and opposers, yet he suffered himself to be abused, despised, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, and at last to be crucified by wicked men and to die on the cross, that sinners, through his love, sufferings

and death, might obtain everlasting life in heaven ! O, love divine ! compared with which all human love is cold and dead !—" Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits !"

But though the almighty power, infinite wisdom, and all the attributes of God, are so wonderful and precious that we should never cease to meditate upon them with gratitude and adoration, yet we will not neglect to come to a serious, devout, and, I hope, useful consideration of his mysterious and, to men, incomprehensible powers of omnipresence and omniscience, which are figuratively referred to in our text—" The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

But I may be told, that the Almighty God is a purely, entirely spiritual being—that he has neither eyes, nor ears, nor hands, nor any material parts or properties ; but we know, for all nature, reason, and the Word of God clearly teach us, that the all-wise Creator and Governor of the universe must have power (in some way to us unknown) to see and hear, and handle and know all that is done, and all that exists in the whole universe ; and this power and capacity may be figuratively con-

sidered as his eyes, his ears, his hands, and his other instruments of operation, though we are not able to comprehend the mode or nature of his being, or the way and means of his operations ; for “ who, by searching, can find out God ?—who can find out the Almighty to perfection ?” But what is meant to be taught in our text is a plain doctrine, that God is present at all times, at the same time, in every place in the universe, understanding and knowing all that is done, or ever was or will be done, and all that exists, or ever did or will exist, in the whole universe. “ He that formed the eye, shall not he see ? He that made the ear, shall not he hear ? He that gave to men all their understanding, shall not he know everything ?”

And the omnipresence and omniscience of God, if fully and realizingly considered, must have a powerful influence upon our hearts and lives ; for they teach most important truths of God—they are united in their powers and results—they are necessary to each other, and to the perfection of God’s other attributes : one could not exist without the other ; and without them, all the other attributes of God would be defective. If he was limited and station-

ary only, in one of our sister revolving planets, he could not display his almighty power, wisdom and goodness to the inhabitants of our world. We should then be as without God and without hope in the world; nay, we should not be at all—we should immediately cease to exist; for there can be no life or existence without the presence of that God who is the source and fountain of all life and existence, and the only being in the universe who is self-existent, and entirely independent and supreme.

Reason, therefore, as well as the word of God, clearly, fully proclaims the omnipresence and omniscience of the Creator and Preserver of all things in the universe, and that they are necessary to the whole perfection of God; and they are necessary to each other, as one teaches and implies the existence of the other.

If God is omnipresent, he must be omniscient. We finite creatures, with limited powers, know all that we are present with; and surely God, with unlimited powers, must know all that he is present with, which is everything in the universe. And if God is omniscient, he must be everywhere present; for he could not know what he could not behold. He could not understand what he could not be with and see, and in some way perceive.

Both reason and the word of God clearly teach, that he who created, preserves and governs all creation, must be an omnipresent, omniscient, Almighty God; for to be able to create, preserve, and direct all, he must be present with all, know all, and be Almighty.

When we contemplate upon all the mysterious, glorious, incomprehensible attributes of God, we are lost in wonder and amazement. There is nothing in the universe to which we can liken them.

But it is not enough that we contemplate the omnipresence and omniscience of God, merely philosophically or truthfully. It is of infinite importance that we should take a serious, religious, soul-impressing view of these wonderful, mysterious attributes of God. And a realizing sense of God's constant presence with us, seeing and knowing all that we do, or contemplate doing, or neglect to do, must fill our souls with profound awe, reverential fear, and holy dread, lest we should sin against him and neglect his worship; and it would tend to keep us from sinning—to purify our hearts, refine and exalt our souls, and make our lives holy and God-like; for if we realize that God is always with us, and we consider ourselves al-



ways with him, under his special care and protection, we must obey his commands, do his whole will, and become in some measure like him.

A full realizing belief that the almighty, transcendently glorious Jehovah, is actually present with us at all times, in all places, will cause no unreasonable fear, terror, or dread, if our hearts are right with him, and if we consider that he is our kind and gracious Father in heaven, and our best almighty Friend, ever able, ready, and willing to do for us more and better than we are able to ask or think, if we only love him, and keep his commandments; but we should rejoice with joy unspeakable, that we have *such* a Father and *such* a Friend always with us; and we should feel and say with delight, "The Lord is our present Shepherd, we shall not want." The Lord is our keeper, why should we fear? why should we apprehend danger or any evil, when God our Friend and Supporter is nigh and careth for us?

If we had a dear earthly friend who was abundantly able and willing to supply all our temporal wants, should we not rejoice and be exceeding glad to have him constantly with us? How infinitely more should we rejoice and be

thankful, that we are assured that we have an Almighty, all-able, all-willing Friend always and ever to be with us, who will provide for us all that we need for time and eternity, if we will love him, and be his obedient children, and true and faithful disciples of his Son, our blessed Saviour?

It is the wicked and disobedient only, who fear and tremble at the thought and truths of the omnipresence and omniscience of God. They are more willing to believe in the creed of the heretic Cerinthus, who taught that the supreme God dwelt in a far remote heaven called Pleroma—that he was surrounded by a select number of Eons, or inferior spirits—that he took no care or concern about this world, or the creatures and things in it—that he was not even the creator of them, but that one Demiurgus, an Eon, was the creator. So it is with the wicked and impenitent—they have no knowledge of the true character of God, of his perfect and holy attributes—these are not in all their thoughts; they are more ready to believe that he is afar off in some remote heaven, and that he cannot see them or know what they do, or intend to do, or neglect to do. But I do believe that if they could obtain a true and hearty

knowledge of the true character of God, of all his benevolent, glorious attributes, and especially if they had a realizing sense of his omnipresence and omniscience, they would be, they must be, immediately convicted of their sins and converted to holiness. They could not sin against, an acknowledged ever-present, all-knowing, heart-searching God. If they were about to commit a sin, they would hesitate, consider, and say to themselves, "Thou, God, seest us! How can we sin against thy goodness and love in thy immediate presence, when thy omniscient eyes are blazing full upon us!" No; they would say, We will no more sin against thee; we will no more transgress thy holy laws: we will humbly implore thy forgiveness; we will worship thee supremely, and love thee with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, as thou hast commanded.

And to conclude the whole matter, I do fully believe that if all the intelligent creatures of God upon earth had a true, perfect knowledge of the character of God, of his great amazing love to men, and above all, if they had a realizing sense of his omnipresence and of his omniscience, they would not, they could not, be tempted to sin against him; indeed, there would



be no sin in the world. The world would become a heaven upon earth; all mankind would be pure, holy, and faithful in duty to God and men; they would be like the angels of God in heaven, whose highest joys, delights, and happiness, undoubtedly are derived from a certain knowledge of the goodness of God, and a realizing sense that he is and always will be with them; for

“They behold him, and with songs  
And choral symphonies, day without night,  
Circle his throne rejoicing!”

O, such may *our* blest employment be for ever  
and ever !

## FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD AND CHRIST.

---

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."—John, xiv. 1.

Belief, or faith, in a religious sense, comprehends trust and confidence. As if Christ had said to his disciples, Believe, and put your whole trust and confidence in God and in me, and then your hearts will not be troubled.

The last part of this text is not rightly rendered. It should have been translated, wholly imperatively. The Greek verb for believe is the same in both places, and in the imperative mood, "πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ εἰς ἐμέ πιστεύετε," and should have been translated, not "*ye* believe," but "believe *ye*," (imperatively,) "believe in God, and believe in me." It was intended, not as a declaration of the fact that the disciples and Jews did then rightly believe in God and in Christ, but as a command that they should *so* believe. And it implied that their faith was not correct and perfect. There was, therefore, good reason why

Christ thus gave the command. For though the Jews (and the disciples retained much of the Jewish faith) did, in some sense, believe in the one only true God, yet their faith was not wholly correct and perfect. They believed that their God was a great, mighty, majestic, glorious, but somewhat vindictive, arbitrary sovereign; that he was a God of war rather than of peace, a God of wrath and vengeance more than of love and compassion; but they did not seem to consider him as the infinite, benevolent, forgiving Father of all mankind; but rather as the God of *their* nation only; as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and of their descendants only. They did not appear to know him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or as the compassionate Author of the great, benevolent, glorious plan of redemption and salvation through Christ. They were in total ignorance or error respecting the object of the mission of the Messiah, the Christ, into the world. And the disciples of Christ, (for they were all Jews) at that time, were very imperfect and erroneous in their faith in God and in Christ. They believed, indeed, that Jesus was the Christ, and that God had sent him as the promised Messiah; but they had

imperfect, wrong views of his true character and the object of his mission. They had a Jewish traditional notion that God had sent him, and that he had consented to come, to be a temporal saviour and deliverer of their nation only from political oppression—to free them, not from their sins, *but* from the Roman yoke—to set up his kingdom on earth—to restore the kingdom to Israel, and not to be a spiritual deliverer and saviour—to save all men from their sins, to bring wanderers back to God and holiness, to establish his kingdom in the hearts of men, and to persuade all men to cease to do evil and learn to do well.

Well, therefore, did Christ deem it necessary to reveal to his disciples and the world, the true and perfect character of God and of himself; and to command them, that after the performance of their whole duty, they should put their supreme trust and confidence in God, and in him as the only source of consolation, joy and hope, and as the only certain remedy for the cure or alleviation of all the evils, trials, troubles, pains and disappointments in this life; and for all fears, anxieties, doubts, or lack of knowledge respecting a future life; trusting altogether in the goodness, love and mercy of

God and his Son. And all men should cheerfully, heartily obey this command of Christ, not only because it is his express injunction, but because it is a most reasonable, all-important, and should be a most delightful duty. For all men are dependent upon God for life, its continuance, and all the enjoyments and blessings thereof, and for all rational hopes of future bliss ; therefore, all should hope and trust in God, that he will continue his blessings to them, and increase their joys and hopes, if they love him and keep his commandments. True and acceptable trust in God must be accompanied with love and obedience to his will. It would be but mockery to say we trust in God, while we rebel against his government and laws. Such a heartless trust will not be acceptable to God, nor will it free the heart from trouble. But true and heartfelt faith in God and Christ will remove all grief and trouble of heart, give joy, and enliven hope.

At the time when Christ made this address to his disciples, he had been informing them that he was about to leave them, and they were in great grief and sorrow—their hearts were troubled. Christ, therefore, endeavored to give them consolation and joy, instead of grief and



sorrow. It is not to be presumed that the apostle John has recorded all that Christ said to his disciples on this interesting, solemn occasion: but we may well imagine that he addressed them largely, and most affectingly, somewhat, we will suppose, after this manner: "My beloved disciples, you seem to be grieved, sorrowful; your hearts are troubled because I told you I was about to go away, to go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. But this would not have grieved you, if you rightly understood the gracious object of my Father in sending me into the world, and the great and benevolent office I have to sustain—what I have to do and to suffer for your sake, and for the redemption of the whole world; but you would rather rejoice and be exceeding glad, especially when I inform you that in my Father's house are many mansions, and that I go to prepare a place for you, and will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. And although, for a time, I shall not be visibly with you, yet in spirit, love, influence and consolation, lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Now I will tell you how you may remove all sorrow and trouble from your hearts, and fill your whole souls with unspeakable joy and

delight. Truly, heartily believe and trust in God and in me. Truly believe in all the perfect, benevolent, glorious attributes of God, and believe in me as his beloved Son, the only mediator between God and men; an all-sufficient Saviour of sinners, ready and willing to save all that come unto God by repentance, and with faith in me as their Redeemer: and believe that my Father and your Father is your best, almighty Friend, who careth for you, and whose love toward you is ineffably great; and believe that my love to you is ardent, and even stronger than death; for I am willing to suffer most excruciatingly, and even to lay down my life for your sake, that you may inherit eternal life and joy.

“If you thus believe, trust, and confide in God and in me, it will be impossible that your hearts can be troubled, or that you can have any lasting sorrow or grief whatever; for my Father and your Father is able and willing to bestow upon you infinitely more and better than you can ask or conceive.”

We must, therefore, conclude that true, cordial trust and confidence in God and in his Son, is the only safe, sure, sovereign balm for all pain, grief and trouble of heart.

We will, therefore, briefly consider what is that safe, sure and cordial trust and confidence in God and in Christ, or what we must believe of and concerning God and Christ, so that our hearts may be free from all grief and trouble.

First, What must we believe of and concerning God?

We must not only have an intellectual, rational faith in God and all his perfect attributes, but we must cordially, sincerely, devoutly believe and *feel* that he is the only true God, the almighty, all-wise, merciful Creator, Governor, and Director of all beings and things in the universe ; that he ordereth all things well, in love and mercy, for the good of his creatures ; that he cannot do injustice ; that he is a just God ; not only of almighty power, but of infinite wisdom, of unbounded goodness, love and compassion ; that his tender mercies are over all his creatures ; that he is omnipresent in love ; that he is a forgiving God to the penitent and faithful ; that he would not that any should perish, but rather that all should return unto him with repentance and faith, and receive everlasting life and joy. And we must believe that God's love to men was so great, so amazing, so ineffable, that he sent



his only begotten, his beloved Son, from the throne of his glory, from the bosom of his love, into this sinful world, *here* to seek and to save those who had wandered from God and holiness, who were lost in sin and transgression; to teach, instruct and persuade sinners to repent, reform, and become reconciled to their kind Father in heaven, to cease to do evil and learn to do well, to become wise unto salvation. And we must believe that God's love to men was such, that he permitted this beloved Son to suffer and die on the cross to effect the salvation of sinners. But after three days' entombment he raised him to life, exalted him at his own right hand on the throne, where he ever liveth to make intercession for sinners; that he hath appointed this Son to be the only Mediator between himself and men; an all-sufficient Saviour of sinners, their advocate at the throne of grace, and the final Judge of all the earth. We must also believe that God will render due justice and retribution to the wicked and impenitent, and abundantly bless and reward the righteous—all who sincerely repent, and seek and worship him in sincerity and truth—all who heartily love him, keep his commandments, do his will, and receive Christ

into their hearts with faith and love. In a word, as the foundation of all saving faith, we must believe that God requires us to love him with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength; to receive Christ as our Saviour; to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to have charity and good will towards all mankind.

Secondly, What is the true, saving faith we must have in Christ, or what must we believe, of and concerning Christ, so that our hearts may not be troubled?

We must cordially believe that he is the beloved Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, the only Mediator between God and men, an all-sufficient Saviour, the only name by which we must be saved; that he willingly, and in obedience to his Father's holy will, consented to undertake the great, merciful, all-important mission to the world, to leave his Father's throne and to come down to the world, to reveal the perfect, benevolent, glorious character of God, his Father, and to save the world from sin and death; not that he came literally to pay the debt of sinners, or to satisfy the justice of God, or to appease his wrath, or to transfer to sinners his own righteousness, or

literally to take upon himself all their sins ; but to save them from their sins, keep them from sinning, to induce them to be sinless, to be righteous, to be pure, holy and fit subjects of mercy and forgiveness, and, through the grace of God and the mediation of his Son, worthy to be admitted to the joys and glories of heaven. All which he was to effect by teaching, instructing, and persuading sinners to repent and reform; to return from their wanderings unto God, who is merciful to forgive the penitent; to become reconciled to their kind Father in heaven, to cease to do evil, and become righteous. And he was to operate powerfully on the hearts and lives of men by his benevolent, wonderful, miraculous works of love and compassion ; by the perfect and holy example of his whole life; by the manifestation of his constant devotion and love to God, his Father; by his love displayed towards men, as he went about continually doing them good, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the afflicted, causing the Gospel to be preached to the poor, raising the dead to life, and even forgiving sins; and, especially, by his example of patient submission to ill-treatment and abuse; to be scourged, reviled,

spit upon, crowned with thorns; and at last to be crucified and to die upon the cross, that sinners might have everlasting life ! Such, we must believe, were the effectual works and sufferings of Christ for the salvation of men ; and we must believe that they were acceptable to God, his Father ; for after three days' entombment, "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it." And then—"glory be to God in the highest !"—*then* our blessed Saviour rose, burst the bars of death, and triumphed gloriously over the grave, and thereby finished his mission of love to the world, and established the doctrine of the final resurrection of all mankind ! And afterwards he personally appeared to his disciples and others—taught, instructed, and blessed them. And while he blessed them he was parted from them, received up into heaven, seated on the throne at the right hand of his Almighty Father, where he ever liveth to make intercession for sinners ! Yes, Christians, can we not all, with an eye and ear of faith, now see him, hear him pleading at the throne of grace for us sinners, saying, O Father, of thine infinite love, and

for my sake who died on the cross for their salvation, have compassion on them ! For my sake, O Father, whom thou lovest, forgive them and receive them into thy kingdom, ever to dwell with me; and with me and all the host of heaven, to worship, adore and praise thee for ever and ever !

Furthermore, we must believe that Christ requires us to obey all his commands and injunctions, to treasure up his instructions in our hearts, to observe all his institutions and memorials, to cause his Gospel, so far as in our power, to be preached to the poor and throughout the world. If we have such trust and faith in God, and in his Son the Mediator, our hearts will not, cannot be troubled; we can have no real lasting sorrow, grief or pain, whatever may be our lot, trials, or sufferings in life. Should we providentially be deprived of all our earthly possessions, our goods and chattels, lands and tenements, and all the comforts and conveniences of life, still, if we have true faith and trust in God and in Christ, we shall have no trouble of heart—we shall be resigned—we shall trust that all things will finally work together for our good, if we love God and keep his commandments, and we



shall say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

My Christian friends, should the hand of God fall heavily, grievously upon you—take from you a beloved son or daughter on whom you depended for comfort and support; should you lose all your children, the delight of your eyes and the joy of your hearts; should your bosom companions, the greatest joys and comforts of your lives, be removed far from you into darkness and death; should you lose your parents, your brothers and sisters; should all your dear connections and friends be no more with you upon earth,—still, if you have this true faith and trust in God and in Christ, you will cheerfully, resignedly submit to the dealings of your kind Father in heaven, trusting, *knowing* that he doeth all things well and for your good; and you will say, It is the Lord who hath done it: let him do what seemeth him good; we believe, we *know* that he must do right, and what is best for us, though we now see it not. And we trust and hope in God that we shall hereafter meet in heaven all our gone connections and friends, even our dear little children whom we loved and lost,

and there with them, and with an innumerable company of angels and glorified spirits, unite in rapturously celebrating the praises of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and of the Lamb, for ever and ever !

Again : should you be personally afflicted—deprived of your eyesight, your hearing, and your other important bodily powers and capacities, (all which are the gifts of God,) should you suffer the most excruciating pains of body, if you have this faith and trust in God and in Christ, you will not sin with your lips nor charge God foolishly ; you will not murmur nor complain, but you will be humble, submissive, cheerful ; your hearts will not be troubled, or moved, or affected by any anguish of your bodies, for you will believe that all will finally work together for your good, if you love God and keep his commandments.

Again: should you in this world be ill-treated, abused, persecuted, even to the peril of your lives, yet none of these things will move you or cause your hearts to be troubled, if you truly believe and trust in God and in Christ : even the last finishing, agonizing trial and struggle of life will not disquiet you or cast a gloom over your joys and hopes. You will think less

of the agonies of death than of the bliss of dying; for to the good, holy, and trusting in God and Christ, death temporal is only sweetly languishing into life eternal, into joys everlasting! for

“Jesus can make your dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are;  
While on his breast you lean your head,  
And breathe your life out sweetly there.”

In a word, all the evils, pains, sorrows, anxieties which this world can crowd upon you, will not hurt you, will not disturb the peace of your souls, will not lessen your love to God and men, will not impede your progress in holiness, will not cause your hearts to be troubled, if you have true faith and trust in God and in his Son. But you may hope and trust in God that all will be well with you for life and for ever, if you rely upon God's gracious word and promises; for he hath said, “Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust; blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O, taste and see that the Lord is good. He is thy help and thy shield. The Lord shall save them, for they trusted in him. Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land and be fed. Trust in the Lord and he shall bring



forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, that cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." The Bible is full of such gracious, consoling words and promises to the righteous—to all who truly love, believe and trust in God, and in his Son—who believe that God is gracious, merciful and forgiving to the penitent, and that he loveth and careth for them, and will of his great goodness provide for them the comforts of life and the joys of heaven, if they sincerely worship him and receive into their hearts with faith and love, his Son, their Saviour, who suffered and died for their salvation, but is risen and gone to prepare a place for them, and has promised that he will come again and receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be with him in glory.

But lest I should be misunderstood, or be thought to be too enthusiastic, I will here observe that this necessary, all-important faith and trust in God and in Christ, does not imply or teach that we should place no trust or faith whatever in any other being or object; for it is our bounden duty to place a subordinate, secondary trust and confidence in all the crea-

tures' works, and providence of God. He designed them all to be trusted in, in a secondary degree—to be acknowledged as his gifts, as his instruments for our good—and he pronounced all the things he had made to be very good. We should trust that this earth, which God made for the use of man, will, with his blessing and our proper labor, produce the necessities for our animal support and comfort. We should trust that all mankind will be mutual helps and assistants to each other, for so God designed they should be. We should trust that parents will take good and proper care of their children in infancy and youth, that they will rightly teach them and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—that our children, if well educated, will be good, and a comfort, joy and delight to us; that our brothers and sisters and all our connections and acquaintance will be kind and do us good, and that all men will be disposed to obey the laws of God and the dictates of nature. We should trust and hope that all the civil and religious institutions, the well-meant associations in the world, all the rational joys and innocent amusement in this life, and everything that God has given or granted us,

may tend to the advancement of our comfort and happiness, to the progress of our virtue and holiness, to the good of mankind, and the glory of God, the giver of all good.

But our faith and trust in created beings and objects should be of a subordinate, secondary nature, vastly inferior in amount; should be considered as the free unmerited bestowment of Him who is above all, in all, the giver of all; who careth for us and ordereth all things well, and for our good and happiness; so that we are bound to put our supreme faith, trust and confidence in God and in his Son our advocate.

Again: this necessary supreme trust and confidence in God and in Christ does not do away, does not dispense with our duty to do and perform *ourselves* whatever God has commanded or required of us, and what he has given us power and capacity to do and perform. He has given us great powers, capacities, and talents for the performance of our duty towards him, ourselves, and our fellow-men, which we are bound to use, improve, and increase, for our progress and advancement in virtue and holiness: they are not given us to be useless, or worse than useless; to be, as it

were, "laid up in a napkin or hid under a bushel," but to be used and improved to the glory of God and the good of mankind. God has justly and reasonably commanded us to love him with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves—to be holy, to cease to do evil, to work out our own salvation, and many other important things he has commanded us to do. And we are not permitted to say that God is unjust or unreasonable, that he has commanded us to do what he has not given us power to do ; for "justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne for ever !" It is, therefore, our indispensable duty always to obey all his commands, and to do his whole will. We were made, specially designed, for rational, holy action, for labor and good works, and not to be mere machines, to be acted upon solely by some mysterious, miraculous, instantaneous influence, without any volition of our own, trusting entirely in an unwarranted faith, that the Holy Spirit will do all that is necessary for us, while we remain inactive and dead in trespasses and sin ; for faith, saith the Apostle, without works (holy works) is dead. Yet, for all that we may or can do, with Divine aid, we are to take no praise or credit to ourselves,

but to give all the praise, all the credit, all the glory to Him who gives us the power to work and labor, to do works acceptable in his sight. And when we have done all that is required of us, and which God has given us power to do, and when we have charity and good-will towards all our fellow-men, *then, then* we are to put our whole supreme faith, trust and confidence in God and in Christ. This is the only sure foundation of faith and trust. This is the one thing needful, and of infinite importance. Without it we should be most miserable—we should be as without God and without hope in the world. Our days on earth would be joyless, gloomy, our whole lives a scene of trouble, anxiety, dreariness, doubt, darkness, despair, and all our hopes of future bliss forever blasted. This faith and trust is the only sure anchor of the soul that is able to sustain us against the storms, tempests, breakers, and all the evils of this world, and to hold us safe and calm in the haven of everlasting joys. And if we truly and heartily possess it, we may hope, through the goodness, mercy and forgiveness of God, his promises and the mission of his Son, to be made safe and happy for time and for ever. Let me then urge you, as



the last words I may ever say to you, faithfully do your whole duty to God and men ; and then let me say to you, as Christ said to his disciples, " Let not your hearts be troubled." Cordially believe in God and in Christ, and your hearts will not be troubled—you will be truly happy, you may hope, for ever and ever !



## REASON AND THE WORD OF GOD IN HARMONY.

“Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord—  
produce your cause—bring forth your strong rea-  
sons, saith the King of Israel.”—Isa. i. 18, and xli. 21.

These injunctions may be considered as given by God to men, for Isaiah was an inspired prophet of the Lord. Well, therefore, coming from such a source, may they claim our highest consideration. And what do they teach, what do they imply? They teach, they clearly imply, that the Lord our God is a God of reason, of infinite reason, and of almighty power to display it; for he would not have called upon his intelligent creatures to come and reason together with him, if he did not himself possess reason and the power of reasoning. He never could command his creatures to do what he had not power to do himself. And he being the source and fountain of all reason and power, must be an infinitely wise and rational being. And it is also fully implied that God

had given to men a portion of his divine reason, and a capacity to use it—and it was his design that it should be exercised, used and improved by them, for their good and his glory.

Hence, we must conclude that reason and the power of reasoning are gifts, most precious gifts of God; and that the light or dictate of right reason is as truly a revelation of God as his holy word, though not so clear and extensive; yet it was the first revelation of God to man. And it reveals much about the character and attributes of God, though not so clearly and perfectly as his holy word; for clouds and darkness are round about it, and it needs a brighter and more perfect revelation to shine through those clouds and darkness, and to display the full glory and perfection of God. The light of nature and reason *alone* is not sufficient to illumine all the joys of life, and to insure the blessed hopes of future, everlasting bliss; it does not reveal to us the all-important truth, that God sent his only begotten, his beloved Son from heaven into the world, to redeem and save the sinful inhabitants thereof; it does not even inform us that the Almighty Father had such a Son; it gives us no account of God's great, benevolent, glorious plan of redemption

and salvation for men through that beloved Son; it affords no certain, satisfactory grounds of hope for everlasting life and happiness in a future state of being, either through the grace of God or the merits and mediation of his Son. And other important things are not clearly revealed by the light of nature and reason. The all-wise, benevolent Father, therefore, deemed it necessary, and that it would be beneficial to men, that he should give them a more full and perfect revelation, which he has graciously done by the revelation, the true and glorious revelation of his holy word, in which there can be no error or imperfection, for it was conceived in perfection and delivered by divine inspiration. And it reveals all that is necessary for men to know. It is ample, full, perfect; it reveals the perfect character of God; all his benevolent, glorious attributes, the loveliness and divinity of his Son, the whole duty of men towards their God, their Saviour, and their fellow-creatures; it is amply sufficient to make all men wise unto salvation, to teach them the way to heaven and glory.

But this perfect, glorious revelation of God, by his holy word, would be no revelation at all, would be but a dead letter, if God had not given

to men his lesser but useful revelation by the light of reason; for nothing good or important could be learned without reason to give the understanding. Have irrational animals, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the inhabitants of the seas, or even idiotic men—have they or can they have any knowledge of the revelation of God's holy word? Surely not. Neither could men, the most intelligent men, have and enjoy that revelation, if God had not given them *reason* by which they can understand, judge and receive it. Reason, therefore, may be considered as the foundation of God's great revelation by his holy word. How unreasonable, then, how ungodly it is for men, the receivers of the gift, to speak lightly or disrespectfully of that reason which God has given them for their guide and director, and which distinguishes and elevates them far above any other creatures upon earth.

But, alas! there have been, and I fear there now may be, some who treat reason, this divine gift, triflingly, contemptuously; who say we should pay no regard to the dictates of reason, for it is vain, erroneous, delusive; but we should be governed by our own sensibility, or by what we imagine the Holy Spirit teaches. And some

say the Bible alone is a sufficient director; but we have already shown that the Bible, the holy word of God, would be of no avail, of no use to men, without the exercise of reason to enable them to understand it and see its worth and excellence. An idiot can have no knowledge of the word of God, because he has no reason to teach it to him. Reason may be considered as the prime teacher of the word of God to men, and so God designed it should be, and gave it for that very purpose.

I would not, however, exalt reason above the Bible, or in contradiction thereto; not that I love reason less than others do, but that I love the Bible more: reason was given us rather for the purpose of explaining the meaning of the word of God, than to control, alter, or amend it; rather to be its aid and supporter, than its opposer and betrayer; its approver, and not its reviler.

And reason and the Bible are in perfect harmony with each other: they must agree, for both are God's instruments, or means of his revelations: and it is impossible that the all-wise, perfect God could give a revelation or command in one way, by one means, and contradict it in another; for all his ways are just, and



true, and unchangeable—"in him is no variableness or shadow of changing;" therefore any construction or commentary upon any text of Scripture which is in violation or contradiction to natural right reason, cannot be the true meaning of the Word of God, who is not only the Author of his own holy Word, but also the Author and Director of all nature and reason. The very learned orthodox English theologian, T. H. Horne, has well said, in his Introduction to the Bible: "Before we conclude upon the sense of any text, so as to prove anything by it, we must be sure that such (sense) is not repugnant to natural reason; if such sense is repugnant to natural reason, it cannot be the true meaning of the Scriptures, for God is the original of natural truth, as well as of that which comes by particular revelation. No proposition, therefore, which is contrary to the fundamental principles of reason can be the sense of any part of the Word of God; and that which is contrary to reason can no more be true and agreeable to revelations contained in the sacred writings, than God (who is the Author of one as well as the other) can contradict himself. No doctrine that comes from God can be irrational. We are sure, therefore, that any inter-



pretation of revealed doctrines that is inconsistent with common sense or reason, must be erroneous." Thus, Professor Horne well reasons upon reason, and I trust that no candid Christians of any denomination can object or doubt the correctness of his views.

I am, however, by no means a modern ultra-rationalist. I do not believe that reason *alone* is a sufficient teacher and guide to teach men their whole duty, and to direct them in the path of duty and the way to heaven, without the light of the Gospel and the whole Word of God for their pole-star and sun of righteousness to enlighten the path.

If the light of reason had been sufficient and all that was necessary, the all-wise God would not have given his further perfect revelation by his holy Word; for he never could do or establish anything that would be unnecessary or needless. All his works and providence are no more nor less than what was necessary and right. He has made and ordained nothing useless, nothing but what is good and wise, though we have not wisdom enough to discern all his wisdom. Our wisdom is weak, limited; his is infinite, unbounded, full, perfect! And he has told us that "He saw all the things he had made,

and behold all were very good." And we may well exclaim with the devout Psalmist—"Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God, Almighty ! In wisdom hast thou made them all."

But if we lay aside the use of reason, and exclude the light of nature and reason, we should not be able to discern all the greatness, wonders, beauty and glory of all the works of God, or the perfection and holiness of his divine providence; nor could we learn that in wisdom he had made them all.

Without reason we should know nothing, fear nothing, love nothing, and be led to do nothing good or praiseworthy; but with reason and the Bible, and a good and faithful use of them, we may become all that is desirable—all that God requires; we may become wise unto salvation, be thereby educated for heaven and glory !

Reason and the Bible were designed to be mutual helpmates, divine companions for life: may they never be divorced by men; they are necessary to each other, they should be ever harmoniously united. Reason without the Bible would be insufficient, and the Bible, without reason to explain it, would be of no use. They must live and work together, and operate upon the heart and the understanding. One without

the other could not give the true character of God, his wondrous attributes and holy providence—could not warm the hearts of men with love and gratitude to God, with faith in their Saviour and Redeemer, and with love and good-will to all mankind—could not make men holy and happy, and induce them to give “glory to God in the highest, and on earth to produce peace and good-will to men.”

Though we have the Bible before us, yet, without reason to aid us, we should not know that there is an almighty, all-wise, benevolent God, who is the Creator and Preserver of the whole universe, who governs and directs all things for the best good of his creatures and for the honor and glory of his holy name—we should not know anything perfectly of our duty to our Creator or to our fellow-creatures—we should not know good from evil, sin from holiness—we should not know that we were made capable of happiness here, or that an all-sufficient Saviour and Mediator was appointed to procure for us everlasting life and joy hereafter.

Without the light of reason, we should have no clear knowledge of any kind, temporal or spiritual, any more than the birds of the air or the beasts of the field. But reason, enlight-

ened by the Word of God, is our only sure, safe guide in all we have to do or understand ; and if we reject or speak lightly of it, we treat the benevolent Author of this divine gift with ingratitude, with contempt.

We are not, however, to adore and worship nature and reason as *God*—as some have profanely done, and perhaps still do. But we should worship, adore and thank the blessed *Giver* thereof, for this his divine, all-important gift to men—a gift which makes all other of his gifts of infinite value.

All the gifts of God are invaluable, but the greatest of them, except the Bible, is reason ; because without the exercise of it we should not know the worth of any of God's gifts, or how to use them for our good and to the honor of the Giver. But reason, in connection and explanation of the Bible, is our perfect teacher. It teaches us to worship our Creator alone, supremely : it teaches us to love him with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength ; to love our neighbors as ourselves ; to have charity and good-will towards all mankind ; to receive Christ, our blessed Saviour, into our hearts with faith and love ; to obey all the commands and injunctions of God and of Christ ; to treas-

ure up their instructions in our hearts ; to become holy children of God and true and faithful disciples of Christ, our Lord and Master.

But while we highly esteem and value the gift, light, and revelation of reason, as explained by that reason which God has given us, we would by no means underrate the perfect, glorious revelation of his holy Word. No ! Though all the gifts of God are of high importance, yet we esteem the gift of his holy Word of infinitely more value—as the climax of all his gifts and blessings to man.

But notwithstanding all the inestimable gifts of God are of infinite importance, yet they are liable to be slighted, and treated with neglect and ingratitude, by his sinful creatures on earth. The Bible is often neglected, thought little of, or wholly condemned ; the light of nature and reason is sometimes considered of no value, or worse than useless ; and all the gifts of God are treated, by some, as if they were of no worth. This is a sore evil under the sun, and a great sin against the Author and Giver of all blessings.

Let us then try to bring about a reformation, for our own good and to the honor of



God—do what will be fruits of true reform. Let us “cease to do evil and learn to do well;” search and study the Holy Scriptures daily, constantly, with devout, grateful hearts and inquiring minds, in order to behold the excellence, the wisdom, the justice, the loveliness, and the encouragements and hopes therein contained. Let us love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and obey all his commands. Let us be governed by the dictates of the light of nature and reason, so far as they are consistent with the Word of God, which we hold they always are unless corrupted by men. Let us exercise our reason well, for our good, the benefit of our fellow-men, and to the honor of the Giver. Let us reason together with candor and charity, and not with bitterness and deceit—not obscurely or delusively, but clearly, fairly, truly. Let us bring forth our strong, powerful, convincing reasons upon all fundamental, essential religious doctrines, and everything of high importance for time or eternity. Let us receive our blessed Saviour into our hearts with faith and love, treasure up his instructions in our hearts, and regard all his institutions with love and gratitude. Let us love our neighbors



as ourselves, and have charity and good-will toward all mankind. Let us obey all the commands and injunctions of God and of Christ, and not disregard what reason teaches. Thus, then, we shall produce a happy and glorious reformation, and be, we hope and trust, through the grace of God and the mediation of his Son, fitted and prepared for admission into *His* glorious kingdom, who is the "Giver of every good and perfect gift."

## WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.

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“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Phil. i. 12, 13.

It will be well, in the first place, to consider what must have been the true, full meaning of the direction of the Apostle in the text; and I will give it, according to my understanding, briefly *thus*: Work out your own—your temporal, spiritual, everlasting salvation—by the performance of good, useful, pious works, with holy fear and trembling; for it is such works that are of God, or the works of God working in you, to persuade you both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure, to his acceptance and approbation.

With such views of the subject, and as Paul was an inspired apostle of the Lord, we must consider his direction as a command of God, not only to the Philippians, but to all men in every age, to be active, alive, earnestly engaged in all good works, working out their

own salvation, as precursory to the working of God in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, to his acceptance and approbation.

In all the affairs of life there is something, much, for men to do. In the earthly field, they must work and labor in order to procure a crop for their support and comfort ; they must sow the seed, and cultivate the soil, before God will give the increase ; they must labor, before God can bless their labors.

So, in the spiritual field, they have great works to perform—holy works of the heart ; they must pray God to forgive their sins, before they can expect his pardon ; they must humbly ask for favors and blessings, before they can hope that God will grant them.

The all-wise, benevolent Creator constituted, designed and qualified men for good works, for useful labor and services, which will make them in some degree God-like and Christ-like : for Christ said, “ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Yes, the blessed Saviour, while on earth, went about continually, doing good works—healing the sick, both of body and mind ; comforting the afflicted and mourners ; causing the Gospel to be preached to the poor, and many other good works.

And God made work and labor absolutely necessary for our support, and for our intellectual and religious health and improvement. It was a primary establishment. When God first created man, he set him to work : "And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress and keep it"—to take care of all the beautiful flowers and delightful trees of the garden. Such was the first delightful employment of our first parents. But alas ! they soon fell from that happy estate by transgression.

And immediately after the fall, God caused the man to work : "And the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground"—to work for his living—and said to him, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread all the days of thy life." Work, therefore, seems to have been made, as it were, constitutional in man. And always to the present day, though God has constantly given to the earth his rain and sunshine, yet no one ever rationally expected to raise a crop for his use and support without work—without sowing the seed, cultivating the ground, and taking care of the produce.

Neither can food or sustenance for the heart

and soul be procured without spiritual, pious works. Meditation, penitence, prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God, are the necessary availing works which, with the blessing of God, and with the spiritual rain and sunshine of his Holy Spirit and the mediation of the blessed Saviour, produce satisfying nourishment for the heart, which if "a man eat thereof he shall never hunger again; and if he drink thereof he shall never thirst again."

But what are we to understand by working out our own salvation? It has an extensive meaning, both temporal and spiritual. Its lowest sense is, that we should do all those works that are necessary for our support and for our happiness—provide well for ourselves, our household, and all our fellow-creatures in want, so far as we are able; and also perform such works as will contribute to the benefit and happiness of all mankind—feed the hungry, clothe the naked, supply the wants of the destitute, visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and relieve the sick and sorrowful. Such will be the works of God working in us to his acceptance and approbation.

But the most important meaning of the text is of a spiritual nature, a work of the heart. It

means that we should endeavor, by good and pious work, to work out our own everlasting salvation—that we should faithfully use all the means and powers God has given us for the purpose, repent and become reconciled to God, obey all his commands, and live holy lives ; and also do all we can for the salvation and happiness of all mankind—persuade them to love the Lord their God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves ; to receive Christ into their hearts with faith and love ; to preach the Gospel to the poor, which is able to make them wise (and rich) unto salvation. Everlasting, spiritual salvation is mostly a work of the heart ; but the head and all the intellectual powers and capacities which God has given, are needed, to inform the heart what it ought to do and how it ought to *feel*, both towards God and men.

But how are you to do such works ? You are told by some divines that you cannot do anything spiritually good ; that you are natively, totally depraved—wholly, absolutely inclined and by nature *obliged* to do evil ; that you cannot do anything towards your own salvation ; that your best works and prayers are an abomination to the Lord.



But can you believe that the infinitely just God, by his servant Paul, commanded you to do what you had no power to do?—that he required of you what he had not given you capacity to perform? If a human governor should thus decree, he would be denounced as a most unjust, unreasonable, despotic tyrant. And I must conclude that all men, by the power and capacities which God has given them, and with the influence of his Holy Spirit, can obey this reasonable command—can work out, as commanded, their own salvation—God working in them to induce them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Strange and inconsistent ideas on this subject, I apprehend, have arisen from a wrong conception of the works necessary for salvation. Some have taught that the work of salvation is a kind of mysterious, miraculous, instantaneous, lightning-like work of the Holy Spirit *only*, in which men have nothing to do, and in which they can do nothing if they try. They may therefore argue, that they may as well go into a spiritual sleep and deadliness—hide, as it were in a napkin, the capacities and talents God has given them for the work, and slothfully, stupidly, wait for the Holy Spirit to come

down and do all for them; to waft them into the haven of salvation, without their even setting their sails to any holy breeze, without their uplifting one prayer to God for aid, or waking from their deathlike slumbers.

This would be like the mariner who would trust alone to Providence to carry his ship over the ocean, while he neglected his whole duty, even refused to unfurl his sails to the wind, or to let on the steam to the engine, or to provide a helm and compass to guide the ship, presuming that He who rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm, will do all that is necessary for his success and the safety of the ship and all aboard, while he lies heedlessly asleep in the cabin.

And the voyage to heaven must be performed with much pleasing labor, with holy works of the heart, with constant watchfulness, even over ourselves, and a faithful look-out to avoid the breakers and whirlpools of sin; for there are many dangers and deceptions in the course not laid down in the chart of life, which may be overcome by the performance of all the works necessary and availing to salvation.

And if all men are not saved, it will not be because God has not given them power to re-

ceive salvation as offered, and to work for it as commanded; but it will be because they do not heartily desire to receive salvation, and to work for it as God has commanded and given them power to do.

But perhaps it will be said that we trust in our own good works for salvation, and not entirely in the free, sovereign grace of God. In some sense we do trust in such works, because we consider them not as our own unaided works, but as virtually the works of God, working in us to enable us both to will and to do of his good pleasure and to his acceptance. But this trust is subordinate; our supreme trust is in the grace of God and the mediation of Christ.

• We trust in our works to procure the salvation of our souls, just as we trust in our own labors to obtain the necessities of life. God has given us as full powers and capacities to perform good and availing spiritual works, as he has to do temporal, useful labor.

And as in the earthly field, we trust that if we use all the means that God has given us, we shall be able to procure the necessities and comforts of life; for we know that God is kind and merciful, and that he careth for us, and

will bless our labor by giving his rain and sunshine, and making the earth fruitful ; so in the spiritual field, we trust that if we perform our whole duty towards our God, our Saviour, and our fellow-men, he will of his infinite love give us the influence of his Holy Spirit, and bestow upon us everlasting salvation. But we do not trust that our best works will be of any avail without the blessing and acceptance of God of them. "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God alone who giveth the increase."

And as in the earthly field we do not expect that rain and sunshine will give us a crop to supply our wants without some labor on our part; so, in the spiritual field, we cannot hope that God will ever work in us the works of salvation before we begin or try to work them out ourselves, as he has commanded, (though we believe that God graciously may, and often does, first cause men so to work by the influence of his Holy Spirit, or other means of grace.) Neither God or Christ ever promised that any one who would not ask, should receive salvation; or that any one who would not seek, should find life; or that any one who would not knock at the door by prayer and supplication, should

be received into the kingdom. There must be a desire, a willingness in men to receive salvation, and to work for it as commanded, before God will be pleased to grant it.

God never saves a sinner before he is willing to be saved, (though by divine providence he is first made willing;) but when by any means he is made willing, he may then be saved through the grace of God and the mediation of Christ.

We are sensible that we ourselves, unaided, can do nothing to merit salvation, for all the merits of our best works belong not to us, but to Him who gives us the power and encouragement to work them, and who would that all men should be saved, and therefore has given them power, and commanded them to work out their own salvation—he working in them, to enable them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

But we trust, and the Bible gives us encouragement to trust and hope, that if we come to God with sincere repentance and relying faith in Christ our blessed Saviour, if we cease to do evil and learn to do well, he will, of his infinite love and mercy, grant us salvation; for he hath declared, that “when the wicked man considereth and turneth away



from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive—he shall surely live—he shall not die.”

But let it be understood, that while we have a subordinate trust in our own good works, yet, above all things, do we supremely trust in the free, merciful grace of God to sanctify our works and make them acceptable to him, and, through the Mediator, effectual to our salvation.

It is a false notion that no trust should be placed in good works in men, for all good works are virtually the works of God working in them. God alone is entitled to all perfect goodness, and there is nothing good but what comes, directly or indirectly, from him ; and what comes in any way therefrom, must be trustworthy and praiseworthy.

Christ trusted in his works, not as his own, but as the Father's, who sent him, and said, “Believe me for my works' sake.” And he sent a message to John the Baptist commendatory of his works—as that he gave “sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, caused the lame to walk, raised the dead to life, and caused the Gospel to be preached to the poor.” He always spoke of his works as the fullest



evidence of his divine mission ; and good works in men should be considered as the best evidence of the fruits of holiness. But though good works are important duties never to be neglected, yet they are not to be accounted meritorious or entitled to claim reward ; yet they are not to be condemned as contrary to the will of God, or the benefit of men ; though I know that some austere divines have said that there is more hope of a most abandoned, depraved sinner, than of a real moral man—that there is no religion in morality, and that good works in men are unavailing and worse than useless. Such absurd dogmas are opposed to the word of God, and to the dictates of nature, reason and common sense.

The Holy Scriptures highly commend good works and all moral duties : they declare that to do justice is better than sacrifice, and that to fear God and keep his commandments is the conclusion of the whole matter and the whole duty of man.

And Christ constantly taught and practised in commendation of good works : his beautiful, divine sermon on the mount is full of moral doctrines ; and it is recorded of him that he loved the truly moral man, and to such an one

he said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven."

And St. Paul often recommended and urged the performance of good works. He wrote to Titus, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works"—works acceptable to God and beneficial to men. And Paul also directs Timothy to charge those that are rich in this world, to do good—to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (and he sets forth the benefits and blessings to be derived therefrom, adding :) "thereby laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

And the Apostle James said, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this : "To visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Such are good religious works of salvation, acceptable to God and beneficial to men ; and they are satisfactory evidence of a good heart and a good life. There can be no good life, there can be no good Christian, without them. Even the bless-

ed Jesus, while on earth, could not have lived a good, pure, perfectly holy life without performing good works ; his very nature led him to go about continually doing good works, which gave glory to God and brought salvation to men. And from his works we know that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

And at all times it is by the example and influence of good works that men individually may be made happy, that domestic and social joys abound, that life in all conditions may be comfortable, that happiness may be extensively diffused, that virtue and religion are promoted, that the world is blessed, heaven is holy, and God is glorified.

Who then can condemn good works in men, the works of God working in them ? Who will presume to say they are unavailing, and worse than useless ?

Paul, in his last address to the Philippians, pleads earnestly for good works. "Finally, brethren," says he, (and so I say to you,) "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good re-

port, and if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things"—think of these things and do them, heartily do them, and so work out your own salvation, while "God is working in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

## PHARISAISM AND DUPLICITY.

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“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites—  
blind guides.”—Matt. xxiii. 13.

The word woe is sometimes used to signify a curse, or condemnation. But it cannot be supposed that Christ used it in that sense; for he came into the world not to curse, but to bless—not to condemn a sinful world, but that the world through him might be saved, be redeemed from sin. His very coming was the greatest blessing that ever God gave to men; it was his constant habit to bless the good and the faithful, and in this world not unkindly to condemn even the wicked and impenitent. When Peter declared his true character, he blessed him; and when he wickedly, ungratefully denied him, he did not in words condemn him, but, with only a look, left him to be condemned by his own conscience. He would not condemn the woman taken in adultery, but mercifully told her to go and sin no more. He did not condemn

his murderers, but devoutly, compassionately, prayed to his Father to forgive them. His nature was so full of love and compassion, that he could not do an unkind act or utter an afflictive word. What, therefore, Christ meant in his expression to the Scribes and Pharisees in our text, must have been as a lamentation, and that he was highly displeased, that he was greatly grieved on account of their unholy, hypocritical conduct, and their irreligious and absurd rites and ceremonies.

But as there was then no sect, or class, or body of men, that received from Christ such severe and often rebukes and disapprobation as the Scribes and Pharisees did, we must conclude that there was in their character, conduct, rites and ceremonies, something most objectionable, wrong and wicked. I will therefore attempt to give briefly their true character, and, as perfectly as I can, trace their origin and progress. And then I will make an inquiry, a thorough examination, to ascertain if there is now in our houses, in our churches, in our societies, or in the civilized, Christianized world, anything of a pharasaical, hypocritical nature existing among men, among those who should be sincere loving brothers.



The character given by Christ of the Scribes and Pharisees is most odious, and entirely unworthy of imitation. In the first place, he pronounces them hypocrites; this term alone comprehends almost everything that is displeasing and despicable in society.

But let us describe who and what a hypocrite is. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be what he is not, always professing to be better than what he really is. He is a dissembler, a deceiver, a wolf in sheep's clothing, an enemy in the disguise of friendship—he sails under false colors—pretends to be more holy than others, who practically are more holy than himself—in a word, he resembles the great deceiver, who pretended to our first parents that he desired to give them light, and knowledge, and wisdom, to make them as gods, while his sole object was their destruction and misery.

But let us consider what Scribes and Pharisees, or hypocrites as Christ called them, are in a religious and pious view. Hear what He, who spoke as never man spoke, said to them and of them. They say and do not, said he; they bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. All their works

they do to be seen of men. They pretend to worship God with their lips, while their hearts are cold and far from him. They cry, Lord, Lord, but do not the will of my Father who is in heaven. They make void the word of God by their traditions. They boast of their good deeds, that they are more holy than others who are practically more holy than themselves, while publicans and harlots will be justified rather than they. They teach men to love their neighbors and hate their enemies. Again he said to them: "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in. Ye devour widows' houses, and for pretense make long prayers, sounding a trumpet before you, that you may be seen and have glory of men. Ye outwardly appear righteous to men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Many other similar descriptions of the Scribes and Pharisees may be found in the New Testament; some of them are figurative; but the general meaning, undoubtedly, is most severe and condemnatory against them.

We will now briefly consider the origin and progress of the Scribes and Pharisees, or hypocrites, as Christ called them.

It appears from sacred and profane history, that while the spirit of prophesy continued there were no religious sects among the Jews; the authority and influence of the prophets checked the rise of different opinions. The sects which afterwards prevailed, arose gradually. And we cannot ascertain exactly the time of the origin of the Scribes; but it is evident that nearly all the sects arose from the doctrines taught by the Scribes after the return from Babylonian captivity. The Scribes were mentioned very early in sacred history, and it has been supposed that they were of two descriptions, the ecclesiastical and the civil. It is said in Judges, v. 14, "out of Zebulon came they that handle the pen of the writer;" and the Rabbis say that the Scribes were mainly of the tribe of Simeon; but it is thought that only those of the tribe of Levi were allowed to transcribe the Holy Scriptures.

The scribes are frequently called wise men, counsellors and doctors. In the reign of David, Jeremiah; in the reign of Hezekiah, Shebna; and in the reign of Josiah, Shaphan, are all called scribes, and are ranked with the chief officers of the kingdom. And Elishama, the scribe in the reign of Jehoiakim, is mentioned

among the princes. We read also in Jer. lii. 25, of the principal scribe of the host, who seemed to be an officer to muster the people.

Previously to the Babylonian captivity, the word 'scribe' was applied to any person who was employed in transcribing manuscripts; and they who were remarkable for writing well were highly esteemed.

The civil scribes are not mentioned in the New Testament. The ecclesiastic scribes were originally confined to writing copies of the law; and the knowledge they thereby acquired led them to become instructors to the people of the written law, which they read publicly. Baruck was a scribe to Jeremiah. And Ezra is called a ready scribe in the Law of Moses, having prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments, (see Ezra, vii. 6-10;) but there is no mention of the Scribes being formed into a distinct body of men till after the cessation of prophecy. But when there were no inspired teachers in Israel, and no divine oracle in the temple, the scribes presumed to interpret, expound and comment upon the law and the prophets in the schools and in the synagogues. And it was then that they

became corrupt, and introduced various glosses, interpretations and dogmas, which perplexed and perverted, instead of explaining the text. And then arose the unauthorized maxim, that the oral or traditional law was of Divine origin, as well as the written law of Moses. And in process of time it was asserted, that when Moses was forty days upon Mount Sinai, he received from God two sets of laws, one in writing, the other oral; and that the oral set of laws was communicated by Moses to Aaron and Joshua; and that it passed down from generation to generation, by the tradition of the elders, and the great national council which was established in the time of Moses: and these oral laws were to be considered as supplemental and explanatory of the written laws, which were represented as imperfect, obscure and defective: they were led to expound the written laws, by their traditions, in direct opposition to the plain meaning of the text.

Prideaux says, these traditions, as they are called, became too numerous, by the middle of the second century after Christ, to be preserved by the memory; therefore the Rabbi Judah, the President of the Sanhedrim, collected them



into six books, which were called the Mishna, or repetition of the oral laws. The Mishna soon became the study of the learned Jews, who employed themselves in making comments upon it; and these comments they called the Gemara, or complement, because by them the Mishna is fully explained, and the whole traditionary doctrine of their laws and religion completed. Thus the Mishna is the text, and the Gemara the comment; and both together make what they call *The Talmud*. That Talmud made by the Jews in Judea is called the Jerusalem Talmud; and that by the Jews in Babylon, the Babylonian Talmud: the former was completed about the year of our Lord three hundred, and the latter, in the beginning of the sixth century.

During Christ's ministry the Scribes made the law of Moses and the prophets their principal study, and they were employed in instructing the people. Their reputed skill in the Scriptures probably induced Herod to consult them concerning the time when the Messiah was to be born; and they were men of great power, influence and authority among the Jews.

Scribes, doctors of the law, and lawyers,



were only different names for the same class of persons. Those who, in the fifth chapter of Luke, are called Pharisees and Doctors of the law, are soon after called Pharisees and Scribes; and he who by St. Mathew is called lawyer, is by St. Mark called one of the Scribes. They had scholars under their care, to whom they taught the knowledge of the law. These scholars in the schools sat on low stools, placed at the feet of the Doctors: hence the expression of St. Paul, that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, or that he sat on a low stool placed at the feet of Gamaliel, a celebrated Jewish Doctor.

At the time of our Saviour, the Scribes had, in a manner, laid aside the written law, having no further regard thereto than as it agreed with their traditionary expositions of it. And so, by their additions, corruptions and misrepresentations, they had made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions; and this accounts for the strange blindness and wrong notions of the Jews respecting the Messiah, whom they had been taught by these commentators to expect as a temporal prince, though Moses and the prophets taught otherwise. And had the Jews fully believed in

Moses and the Prophets, instead of the Scribes and the Pharisees, they could not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Christ, when speaking of them of old times, classed the prophets and wise men, and Scribes and Pharisees together; but of the later Scribes he always spoke with censure and disapprobation, and usually joined them with the Pharisees, to which sect they in general belonged. And St. Paul inquires, (Cor. i. 20,) "Who is the wise? who is the scribe? who is the disputer of this world?" evidently feeling a disapprobation for such as, professing to be wise above what is written, become fools.

But although the Scribes have never been taken to be a Jewish sect by themselves, distinctly considered; yet the later Scribes, (those after the cessation of prophecy,) by their glosses, interpretations, traditions and commentaries, formed and established the sect of the Pharisees, with whom they seemed to be intimately connected in the time of our Saviour, forming, as it were, one body in alliance, and being always named together in his censures and rebukes.

It is not clearly ascertained at what time the sect of the Pharisees was first established.

Goodwin thought that they arose about three hundred years before Christ; but Josephus gives no account of them till one hundred and eighty years before Christ, when Hyrcanus was high priest. Then, says Josephus, they were a sect of considerable weight. Their name was derived from *Pharos*, a Hebrew word which signifies separated or set apart, because they affected an extraordinary degree of sanctity and piety. Their distinguishing dogma was a zealous adherence to the traditions of the Elders, which they placed upon, at least, an equal footing with the written law. They were strict observers of external rites and ceremonies, and superstitiously exact in paying tithes of the most trifling articles, while they frequently neglected most essential duties. They were of opinion that formally good works might claim reward from God; and they ascribed an extraordinary degree of merit to the observance of rules which they had themselves established as works of supererogation—such as their frequent washings and fastings, their strict avoidance of supposed sinners, such as Publicans and Samaritans, their rigorous observance of the Sabbath, and their long prayers, which they ostentatiously made in the synagogues and at

the corners of the streets, to be seen of men. Yet their specious sanctity of manners, and their hypocritical display of zeal for religion, gave them a great influence over the common people, and a vast power and authority in the Jewish state. The people generally held to the tenets and observed the traditions of the Pharisees.

As to faith, the Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul, and in the existence of angels and spirits; and they had an imperfect belief in future rewards and punishments hereafter, and in some other respects their faith was not *wholly* unscriptural and irrational.

2. We are to inquire, examine and ascertain, if there is now existing in domestic life, in the church, in society, or in the civilized, Christianized world, any thing of a Pharisaical nature among men—if any, though not nominal, yet practical Scribes and Pharisees, can be found in this day and generation.

In noticing, stating, or condemning the errors, imperfections, faults, or sins of men, it is always commendable to begin the examination with ourselves. We should first cast out the *beam* in our own eyes, so that we may see clearly to pull out the mote (in a friendly manner) from

the eyes of our brethren. One who judges himself severely, truly, will judge others righteously, charitably, justly. One who is willing to cast out the beam in his own eye, will not be solicitous to look sharp for a *small* mote that may be in his brother's eye.

Now let us seriously ask ourselves, Are we entirely free from pharisaism, hypocrisy and deception? Do we always appear what we really are? Do we sometimes put on the appearance of sanctity, while sin remains in our hearts? In our most holy performances, in our addresses to the throne of grace, do we sometimes offer only lip-service, when our hearts are cold, undevout, and far from God? Do we ever cry, Lord! Lord! and not do the will of our Father in heaven? Do we love our neighbors and friends, and practically hate our enemies? In our moral duties and conduct in society, are we always upright, just and kind; or do we never dissemble or practise any kind of deception or injustice, directly or indirectly? Do we constantly feed the hungry and clothe the naked, or do we only say to them, be ye filled, be ye clothed? When we behold the poor, the afflicted, the distressed and the wounded, do we immediately have



compassion on them, go to them, supply their wants, comfort them, bind up their wounds, pour in oil and wine, and promise to come again and do for them what further they may need ; or, like the priest and the Levite, do we pass by on the other side, without granting any relief ? Do we, in religious matters, promote the cause of pure Christianity ? Do we, as much as in our power, cause the Gospel to be preached to the poor ? Or do we even neglect to attend the public worship of God ourselves, with our families ? In fine, do we always imitate the perfect example of our Saviour, who went about continually doing good, or do we too often follow the practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, on whom Christ denounced a woe ?

After thoroughly examining and rightly judging ourselves, we may be allowed, kindly and in a friendly manner, to consider, and even to judge, in the case of our neighbors and the rest of mankind ; to inquire about their professions and their conduct, their faith and their works. Are there not some apparently good people in all departments and business in society, who in their transactions are hypocritical and delusive—who too highly and



untruly applaud some things, and unjustly misrepresent others—who speak not the truth impartially in all cases? Are there not some professors of religion in some of the churches who show more appearance of sanctity in their faces than evidence of holiness in their hearts and lives? And are there not some religious sects who make an outward show of piety, while their hearts and lives produce not the fruits of righteousness—who, in a manner, make void the Gospel of Christ by the tradition of creeds, catechisms, confessions of faith and dogmas of human invention—who practically thank God that they are not like other men, or even as some other denomination of Christians—who pronounce all who cannot believe in their creeds, heretics, unbelievers, and not worthy of the name of Christians—having none of that charity which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, is not puffed up, which believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things? But I make no assertion, pass no condemnation against any one, or any sect; I only make a serious inquiry: and I would that the inquiry might be made to all, “quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the soul and spirit, and a

discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

But pharisaism, dissimulation and hypocrisy are not confined to religious professors; they may be found, more or less, in all civilized society, in all professions, and among every class or condition of men. They abound greatly in the political world. Are there not many professedly patriotic statesmen, who pretend to love their country dearly, but who love themselves more? who can talk and proclaim for hours—yea, days, as if their hearts would break, about the good, the rights, the prosperity and happiness of the people, and the honor and glory of their country, while they are, in fact, only seeking their own interest and to gratify their own personal ambition? and do they not sometimes flatter and deceive the people, to gain their approbation and their votes? I do not know what ground there may be for such inquiries; but I wish that some of our great or pretended great politicians, who can tell, would give us the whole, the plain truth of the matter.

I am, however, well persuaded, that there have been, and now are, many, very many, pure, sincere, excellent, patriotic statesmen in our country. I know we have had a *Washington*,

whose name alone speaks everything that is good, great, worthy, and patriotic; against him even the tongue of slander cannot *hiss* a word: and I might also name many of his co-patriots, his friends and the friends of their country, as worthy of all praise, but I leave this to history. And our future hopes and prospects must be enlivened and brightened by the fact, that we have now many great, distinguished statesmen and patriots whom God has given us, and in whom we may safely trust; who possess the love and esteem of all true Americans, and the admiration of the whole civilized world.

Still, however, we must lament that in all professions, in all kinds of occupation and business, among men of all ranks and condition, there is too much hypocrisy and false appearance in the world. We need not particularize. Of this, however, we may be assured, that though Christ is not now on earth to rebuke the wicked, deceitful and pharasaical; yet, by his Gospel, he does and will pronounce a woe upon all those who are false and hypocritical in their conduct, rites and ceremonies; but upon all those who are sincere and pure in heart and life; who do the things they speak; who love the Lord their God with all their hearts, and

their neighbors as themselves; who do the will of their Father who is in heaven; who perform their whole duty towards God and men; who receive Christ into their hearts with faith and love, and truly imitate him, treasure up his instructions in their hearts, and observe all his ordinances—to all such he, the final Judge, will announce that soul-satisfying, beatific decree and proclamation, “Well done, good and faithful servants; enter ye into the joys of your Lord !”

LECTURE

IN

SUPPORT OF TRUE, OLD ORTHODOXY.

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It is my intention clearly to define, and fully to support Orthodoxy—true, evangelical, biblical Orthodoxy—I mean, so far as respects God, the Father Almighty, and his Son and Holy Spirit. I do not intend, now, to dwell much upon other controverted points, some of which may be, and some are not, absolutely essential to salvation and eternal life.

Our best lexicographers define Orthodoxy to be “soundness of opinion and doctrine—consonance with the genuine doctrines taught in the Scriptures.” And the Greek words “*orthos* and *doxa*,” from which our English word is derived, literally signify right thinking, or true faith. And the Bible definition is, “The faith which was once delivered to the saints,” which



must be orthodox, for it was the Gospel of Christ.

We must therefore inquire and define what is this true, evangelical orthodoxy and faith which was once delivered to the saints? It is my design to go to the source of all truth, and to define it as I find it in the Word of God, in the teachings of Christ, and the Prophets and Apostles, and as received and held by the early Christians and Fathers of the Church of the first centuries after Christ. I will first state it clearly, intelligibly, and then produce the evidence to support it; and if the evidence is not satisfactory and conclusive, I ask no one to believe or receive it; but I earnestly entreat all orthodox Christians, all who are called orthodox, and all lovers of the truth, to consider this subject seriously, prayerfully, free from prejudice, for the truth's sake. I view it of great consequence: and at my age, (in my 85th year,) when I must expect soon to be called before the Judge of all the earth, to give an account of what I may say or do, I can have no personal object in view—I dare not advance anything, but to maintain the “truth as it is in Jesus,” and to support the whole Word of God; and I would proceed with as much awe and

reverence, as if I was under examination before the appointed Judge of all the earth.

And now, after many years' diligent consideration, and a careful examination of the whole of the Scriptures, (the main source of knowledge of the subject,) and, in particular, of the commands and proclamations of God himself, and also of the teachings of Jesus Christ, the prophecies of the prophets, the preaching of the apostles of Christ, and the opinions of the early Christians and fathers of the church of the first centuries—I must conclude that the only true, evangelical orthodoxy, or faith which was once delivered to the saints, was, and is, that God, the Father Almighty, is the one only, true, self-existent, supreme God;—and that Jesus Christ is truly the only begotten, beloved Son of God, (or as he may be called) God of God, “very God, the Son of very God the Father;” and that the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, as it should be translated, is the Spirit of God the Father, and not separately and personally God the third person in the Godhead, though it is used to signify sometimes God the Father himself, and sometimes his influence, or power, or some of his attributes.

Such, I believe, is the true, evangelical orthodoxy and faith which was once delivered to the saints, which was commanded and solemnly proclaimed by God himself, taught by Jesus Christ, predicted by the prophets, preached by the apostles, and believed and held by the early Christians and fathers of the church of the first centuries. No other orthodoxy or theological doctrine was ever known or heard of before the fourth or fifth century. I will therefore now introduce the evidence (which I think must be irresistible) to support this orthodoxy.

The first commandment of the Decalogue proves the unity of God—"Thou shalt have no other Gods before (besides) *me!*" The command is not, "Thou shalt have no other God besides *us*," the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, using the plural number, but it is in the singular number, *Me*—which must mean *Me*, the one only true God, for the true God would not give a commandment which should mean different or contrary to its express declaration.

And Christ informs us that (in substance) the first of all God's commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, (that is, know, understand, believe it,) the Lord our God, the Lord is one!" and (be-

cause he is that One only) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God (not Gods) with all thy heart, etc." (Whenever the word hear is used imperatively in the Bible, it always means know, understand, believe.) In these two commandments there is not even an intimation of a tri-personal, or triune God, nor is there anywhere in the Bible any evidence of such a God. But contrariwise, God himself solemnly proclaims of himself, "I alone am God, and there is none else—none besides, none with me.—There is no God like me—I am the Almighty God!" This he repeatedly proclaimed of himself. And it is certain that he who gave these commandments and made these proclamations was God the Father; for Christ, the faithful and true witness, solemnly announced that his Father was the only true God; he never said that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were the only true God; he always spoke of God as one, and as his God and Father—always used the singular number, and so did the prophets and the apostles. And the Apostle Paul expressly declared that there is but "one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ," who is the only begotten Son of God, and not the self-existent supreme God himself.

And as to the Son, the omniscient God repeatedly, solemnly proclaimed that he was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased: he never revealed that he (the Son) was the, or a self-existent, unoriginated, supreme God; therefore it cannot be God's truth, if God has never revealed it. And can men know more than God has revealed, or what is contrary to his whole revelation?

Besides, the Son himself never said, or in any way acknowledged, that he was the self-existent, supreme God, but denied it; and always affirmed that God was his Father—that he received his being, and all he possessed, from him—lived by him, as his only begotten Son, his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased.

And as to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, it is evident from Scripture that it means or signifies God the Father, or his power or influence, and not personally God the third person in the Godhead, or any person at all.

But as some persons may place more faith in the words and creeds of uninspired men than in the declarations of the true God and his Son, and the inspired writers of the Bible, I will give the evidence and statements of a large



number of uninspired, though excellent, wise, well-instructed, pious men and Christians, and fathers of the Church of the first centuries (and some after) relating to God the Father Almighty, and his Son Jesus Christ. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Christian fathers, a convert to Christianity from the Platonic philosophy, supports the sole supremacy and strict unity of God the Father Almighty, and the subordination to and derivation of the Son of God from the Father. He says, Christ is Lord of hosts according to the will of the Father, who gave him that power and who sent him. "God in the beginning, before anything was created, begat a rational power from himself, which is called Glory of the Lord, Son, Wisdom, God, Logos, etc., which names he bears, because he ministers to the will of the Father, and was begotten by the will of the Father."

Irenæus says, our Lord acknowledged one Father, and that he is the God over all, the one only God, the Creator, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Clemens Alexandrinus says : " Our Lord taught that God the Father only, and alone, is supreme over all ; and our Lord being the

only teacher of truth, we must be satisfied to be informed by him that the Father is above all ; for he saith, My Father is greater than all."

The great and learned Athanasius (but here I should state, that the creed commonly called the Athanasian creed was not written by him, nor published till long after his death)—he was truly a great man in his day, and was then the head and leader of orthodoxy ; but he has written, in commenting on the text, "There is one God, and there is none other but he," (Mark, xii. 32,)—this he says is true, "for there is one God, and there is none but he. And when the Scripture saith that the Father is the only God, and there is one God, the first and the last, these things are well spoken ; for he is the one God, and the first and the only one—the true God, who is absolutely and strictly such ; I mean the Father of Christ." And he adds, "when our Lord affirms, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, he does not mean that he himself is the Father, but that he is such as the Father is." And he thus illustrates it : "If a man, after seeing the image of the king, should desire to see the king himself, the image might say to him, I

and the king are one, and what you see in me, you see in him."

Gregory, Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, surnamed Thaumaturgus, says: "There is one God, the Father of the living Word, the Perfect Begetter of the Perfect Begotten, the Father of the only Begotten Son. And there is one Holy Spirit, having existence from God."

The learned Eusebius, an early ecclesiastical historian, lays it down as a constant known doctrine of the Church, that "Christ is *not* the God over all—but that these are the peculiar titles of the Father only."

Lactantius says: "Christ was faithful to God, for he taught that there is but one God, and that he only is to be worshiped; nor did he ever call himself God, because he had not been faithful, if, being sent to declare the one God, he had introduced any other than that one."

Novatian says: "Christ, though he knew that he was God (of God,) as having God for his Father, yet he never compared himself with God the Father, remembering that he was from his Father, who gave him to be what he was. Hence he never thought of it, so to claim divinity as to equal himself with God

the Father. Nay, on the contrary, he was always obedient to his whole will and pleasure."

Basil says: "The Supreme God over all has alone that singular manner of subsistence by which he is the Father, and subsists without deriving from any source whatever; and by this character he is peculiarly distinguished, as the Son is by the character of only-begotten."

Cyril remarks: "When the Father willed that all things should be formed, the Son formed them, by appointment of the Father, that so the original, absolute, supreme power might be referred to the Father."

Tertullian, the learned Bishop of Carthage, when commenting on the saying of Christ, "I and my Father are one," says: "It means one thing, of one mind. One ( $\epsilon\nu$ ) being in the neuter gender, it cannot mean one person, or one being, but union and agreement in love and design." And again he says: "God was not always Father, because he was always God; for there was a time when the Son was not, who might make the Lord a Father, and he would not be a Father before he had a Son."

Epiphanius says : "The Father Almighty acts by his own authority; but the Son acts not by his own authority, as the Father does, but ministerially, after a like manner, as the Father."

The famous and most learned Origen, in his day, who wrote much on theology, in the third century, said : "We worship one God, the Father ; we worship the Father of the truth, and also the Son, who is the truth—they being, indeed, two in subsistence ; but in agreement, consent, and sameness of will, they are one. And all prayer should be made directly to the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son."

The language of the famous decree of the Council of Nice in the fourth century, and which was then considered orthodox, reads thus : "We believe in one God, the Father, Maker of all things, visible and invisible ; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance (nature) of the Father, God of God, very God of God, who for us men, and for our salvation, descended, and was incarnate and made man, suffered, and on the third day rose again, and ascended into heaven, etc. And we believe in the Holy Ghost." This creed must be con-



sidered orthodox ; for if the Council believed in *one* God, the Father, they must be estopped from believing in another equal God, the Son, and also a third God, the Holy Spirit ; for that would make three Gods, and so contradict the first article of their decree.

The creed of the Arians (though Arius was condemned as a heretic by a partial Council) does not differ but a little from the Nicene decree. Thus it reads : "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the Creator and Maker of all things ; and in his only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father before all ages, God of Gods, etc. ; and in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter."

The creed commonly called the Apostles' Creed, (though no one knows who was the author of it,) is generally received by the churches to this day. It is apostolical, and I think may be considered orthodox. It is in these words : "I believe in one only God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth ; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, etc. ; and in the Holy Ghost."

Marcus Victorinus says : "The Father is greater than the Son, because he gave all things to the Son, and is the cause of the Son's

being, and of his being what he is. And this doctrine is declared by Justin Martyr, Novatian, Hilary, Basil, Athanasius, Nazianzen, Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and others, as their writings fully show."

I might quote much more of a like kind, from many early councils, and Christians, and fathers of the Church, but I think it not necessary ; for they all held the views I have taken of the true orthodoxy, or faith, which was once delivered to the saints. I can find among them no declaration, not even a suggestion of a tri-personal or triune God ; or that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, or God of God, was a self-existent, supreme God ; or that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God the Father, was separately and personally God, the third person in the Godhead, or any person at all, as it could not be, for it is of the neuter gender (*Pneuma to Agion*,) which, I believe, was never rightly applied to any real, living person, in heaven or earth.

And should not some credit be given to the early Christians and fathers of the church in the first centuries ? Is it not to be presumed that the truth would be better known, and more perfectly declared, by those who lived

immediately after the Apostles, than by those who came into being a thousand or more years after? I will suppose there is a great, inexhaustible fountain of pure, sweet water, from which a stream flows a thousand or more miles through much impure, adulterated matter on the shores frequently falling into the stream. Now, if you desire to obtain pure, sweet, drinkable water, would you seek to get it by following up the stream to near the great sweet fountain, or would you go down the stream a thousand miles or more, and seek it where it may have become impure, base and adulterated?

But as there may be good, pure water at some distance from the fountain, I will quote something from pious, learned Christians who lived some time since the fourth century. The Word of God may be considered as the great spiritual fountain of all pure, holy, spiritual water; and all true Christians, as streams issuing therefrom. I will therefore notice some of the issues of some of those pious streams.

Bishop Pearson, who has been highly esteemed, on account of his able treatise on the Creed, says: "There is but one person who is from none. And the generation of the Son, and

the procession of the Holy Ghost, undeniably prove that neither of those two can be that person. It followeth, therefore, that this person must be the Father. From hence he is styled the one God, the true God, the only true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There can be but *one* person, originally of himself subsisting; because if there were more persons thus subsisting, it would necessarily imply a plurality of Gods. Jesus Christ, who certainly is not the Father, cannot be a person subsisting of himself." Further the Bishop says: "The Father is greater than the Son, in reference to the communications of the Godhead. I know him, saith Christ, for I am from him. And because he is from the Father he is called by those of the Nicene Council, God of God, very God of very God. The Father is God, but not God of God, or from God, but the Son is God of God, or from God. The Father is the only Potentate, because He alone hath all power of himself."

The highly esteemed Bishop Bull says: "The assertion of the Son's subordination to the Father is particularly to be heeded, on account, that some modern writers have earnestly contended that the Son may, properly, be styled

God of himself, which opinion is both contrary to their own hypothesis, who maintain it, and to the catholic doctrine. He, the Father, is derived from no original, is subject to none, and can no more be said to be sent (as the Son is) than to be begotten—which things denote some superiority of the Father over the Son. The Son in all divine operations is the minister of the Father, forasmuch as he derives his operating powers from God the Father, and the Father operates by him; and on the contrary, the Son does not operate by or through the Father."

The learned Mr. Mede says: "To us (Christians) there is but one sovereign God, the Father, of whom are all things, and to whom as supreme, we are directed to offer all our services; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things which come from the Father to us, and through whom alone we find access to him."

The excellent Dr. Payne says: "The Father is the only self-existent, unoriginated Being, whom the Scriptures, creeds, and Christian offices, call God, absolutely, and by way of eminence and prerogative. The Son is produced of the Father, and so is not (orto Theos) God



of himself, in that sense that the Father is, who is from none; but God, as it signifies a self-existent, unoriginated Being, is predicated only of the Father."

I have exhibited but a small part of the evidence that might be offered in support of true orthodoxy, or the faith that was once delivered to the saints. But is not what I have adduced amply sufficient to prove, beyond a doubt, that God, the Father, is the only true, self-existent, supreme God? Did not God himself give commandment to that effect?—"Thou shalt have no other Gods before (besides) *me*."

And again, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is *one*." And did he not solemnly proclaim of himself—"I alone am God, and there is none besides me." And that it was God, the Father, who gave these commandments and made these proclamations, is certain, because Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, has devoutly declared that his Father is the only true God; and the inspired Apostle Paul has asserted, "that there is but *one* God, the *Father*," and all the Christians and fathers of the church of the first centuries held the same doctrine. And will Christians now attempt to establish a different doctrine, or one directly contrary to what God has revealed, or

what Christ and his Apostles have clearly taught? Or can we believe that the all-wise, only true God has not revealed all that is necessary for men to know? or that he has not fully declared the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? And is it not enough for us to know and believe all that God has expressly revealed, and what Christ and his Apostles have plainly taught?

And with regard to the Son of God, is it not clearly proved that Jesus Christ is the only begotten, beloved Son of God, the Father, or God, the Son, or God of God? He said of himself that he was from the Father, and lived by the Father; so he could not be self-existent and ever-living; because, not two thousand years ago he died on the cross. But he must be, what God has solemnly declared him to be, in the highest sense of the term, "the Son of God—the only, the beloved Son of God—the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," the perfection of his holiness, and the Saviour of the world! And is not all this enough to constitute him "worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever?"

Now, if Christ is truly the Son of God, he

may well be called God—God the Son or God of God (but not the self-existent, supreme God,) for every son is entitled to the name of his father; and God himself has called him God, as in Heb. i. 8, “and to the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” And this inheritance of a name is recognised to Christ in the Bible, for we read that by inheritance he hath obtained a more excellent name than the angels—a name above every name, and this name must have been the Son of God, or God the Son, or God of God, which is surely above every name.

And this view of the Son of God will remove all difficulty in understanding and reconciling some texts of Scripture (and there are but few) in which the Son is called God. For by supplying two words, *the Son*, or *of God*, after God in the text, all difficulty will be removed, and the text will harmonize with the whole of the word of God. And all translators of the Bible have found it necessary, and thought it right, to supply some words to make some texts plain and intelligible, and consistent with other parts of Scripture; and I see no reason why we may not do likewise, where the necessity fully appears. Let us look at some texts in point.

We read in the 1st chapter of Heb. at the 8th verse, "and to the Son, he (the Father) saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," etc. (I do not agree to the translation made by some, God is thy throne.) This "O God" cannot mean the supreme God, the Father, whom the Son always called his God, because it is addressed by the Father to the Son, and because in the next verse it is said, "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee above thy fellows," etc. Therefore the person anointed could not be the supreme God, for the supreme God never was or could be anointed, and never had fellows or equals; but it was the supreme God who anointed his Son, God of God. Therefore by supplying the words, of God, the text will harmonize with the whole word of God; and it may be thus understood, "and to the Son, God said, Thy throne, O God, *my Son*, on which I have established thee, is for ever and ever."

Again: see Acts, xx. 28: "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This God cannot be the ever-living, purely spiritual God, who had no blood to shed, and cannot suffer or die, to purchase the church, but it must mean God (the Son supplied) who truly purchased the church by his own blood, or by his sufferings and death.

Again: see the 9th chapter of Isaiah, where it is prophesied, that "to us is (will be) born a child, and his name shall be called (among other names) the mighty God!" But this child born could not be the self-existent, supreme God, for he never was and never can be born, or caused to exist, at any time, for he existed, without cause, from all eternity. Besides, he was not to be called the *Almighty God*, but only the mighty God. And there is a vast difference between mighty and *Almighty God*. I believe that the word almighty is not applied in the Bible to any being in heaven or earth, but to God, the Father Almighty only, who declared of himself—"I am the Almighty God!" Who, then, is this mighty God? It must be God the Son of Almighty God, who declared "that all power in heaven and earth was given him of his Father," which surely would make him a mighty God. And hence the seeming inconsistency of a child born and a mighty God in the same person, is reconciled by supplying after mighty God, *the Son*, or of God—reading, the mighty God, the Son, or God of God. The Son, or God of God, is truly a mighty God, but he is not the Almighty, supreme God—he is nowhere in the Bible claimed so to be—he is nowhere called the *Almighty God*!



I need not refer to more texts of this kind : they may all be made plain and easy to be understood, and reconciled in harmony with every part of the Bible, by supplying after God, *the Son*, or *of God*, reading *God the Son* or *God of God*.

And as to the Holy Spirit, is it not fully evident that by the Holy Spirit is meant the Spirit of God the Father ? He repeatedly calls it "my Spirit." He never calls it a personal God, or the third person of God. But in some sense it signifies God the Father ; as the spirit or soul of man is considered as the man himself, so the spirit of God may be considered as God himself. Though it is often used to signify his power, or influence, or one of his attributes, as where we read of God's giving, sending, pouring out, or in any way communicating his Holy Spirit, it must mean his power, or love, or some of his attributes ; it cannot be separately, personally, God, or the third person of God. Indeed, the third person in the Godhead is nowhere even mentioned in the Holy Scriptures—it must be an invention of uninspired men ; it cannot be that person, or any person at all, for it is in the neuter gender, as I have stated, which is not applicable to any real, living person. Many

of the Gods of the heathen are in the neuter gender, but I did not suppose that any Christian's God was of that gender. We, Christians, do not worship stocks and stones, or golden images, such as Nebuchadnezzar the king set up, but we worship the one supreme, spiritual Being; and, in a secondary sense, we honor or worship his Son, as God the Son, or God of God, but not as the self-existent God. And the angels are required to do the same, for "when he bringeth in his first begotten Son into the world," he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him,"—worship him as the first begotten Son of God, or God of God, and not as supreme God. Besides, we are nowhere in the Bible commanded or directed to thank, love, or worship the Holy Spirit (*eo nomine*) as God, or the third person of Deity, because it is not a person capable of receiving thanks, love, or worship. For all the thanks, love, and worship on account of the Holy Spirit are due (and much is due) to God the Father, the possessor of his own Holy Spirit, and who, of his infinite love, is willing to bestow much of it upon his sinful, undeserving creatures.

If a parent makes a valuable present to his child, the child should not thank the *present* but

the parent, for his goodness in giving it; so, if our heavenly Father, of his infinite love, is pleased to communicate to us his Holy Spirit, we are not to thank the Spirit for being given, but the Father for his great benevolence in bestowing such an inestimable gift upon his unworthy children.

Christ said, the works he did were not his own, but the Father's who sent him. And the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the breath of God. And we find that just before Christ ascended into heaven, he breathed on his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, the spirit of God," the love and blessing of the Father; and this was a work of God, committed to the Son to do. And it was one of the last and most precious works which Christ ever performed on earth; and full proof that the Spirit of God cannot be a personal, supreme God, or the third person in the Godhead; for Christ could not have breathed on his disciples a personal, supreme God, but only the spirit or love of God the Father.

And if we go back to the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, we are informed, that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." But, it does not seem

probable that this was a distinct, personal, supreme God, or third person of God; but it must have been the power or wisdom of God that controled the waters, and caused them to be "gathered together into one place."

I may have introduced sufficient evidence and arguments to support fully the true orthodoxy, or faith, which was once delivered to the saints; but I wish to offer briefly another kind of testimony, which I call negative proof, or proof of a negative.

The want, non-production, and non-existence of all competent evidence to prove and support an affirmative proposition is satisfactory proof of the negative; for an affirmation must be proved, beyond all reasonable doubt, by competent evidence, or it cannot be credited, but the negative of it must stand, and be considered as supported. This is the law of all evidence, divine and human.

Now let us apply this law. I will first suppose a secular case; I will suppose that we have just received telegraphic information that General Washington, in his lifetime, had a highly esteemed son. But we don't believe it. And how shall we disprove it, or prove the negative? It will be enough, it will be amply

sufficient, if we show that there is no evidence in existence to support the affirmative information—that there is no history or biography of Washington, and no testimony of any kind, private or public, to be found, that mentions, or even hints, that General Washington ever had such a son, or any son at all; and this would fully prove that he never had a son. Because if the affirmative were true, it would seem morally impossible that there should be no evidence to support it.

But I will state three other real cases of a higher and more serious nature:—First, it has been seriously affirmed that the *one* only true God is *three*, or tri-personal, or that he somehow, inconceivably, subsists in three persons. The second affirmation is, that the Son of God is the self-existent, supreme God. The third affirmation is, that the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, is, separately, personally, the supreme God, and the third person of God.

Now let us search diligently, faithfully, and see if we can find any evidence to support either of these affirmations. And where must we look to find it, if it can be found? To the Bible, certainly, all will allow: if it cannot be found there, it cannot be found anywhere; for that is



the fountain of all truth on the subject. And what said the Holy Scriptures about a tri-personal God, or of three persons of God? Not one word can be found in that holy book, that full, perfect revelation of the omniscient God! Such ideas are not even suggested in the whole of the Scriptures, from the beginning to the end.

And as to the second affirmation—that the Son of God is the self-existent, supreme God, there is no evidence in the Bible to support it; not a word can there be found expressly to prove it. Of course, nothing anywhere can be found that will support this affirmation.

So, also, as to the third affirmation, that the Holy Spirit is separately, personally, the supreme God and third person of God, there is no evidence in the Bible that expressly proves it. Therefore the negative is sustained.

We therefore find that all and each of these three affirmations are unsupported by any affirmative, existing testimony, and of course disproved by even no testimony, by the absence of all testimony to sustain them, and this we call testimony which proves the negative. But we need not rely upon this kind of proof only, for the Bible is full of positive evidence to

prove the negative, so far as a negative can be proved. The omniscient God has very positively declared that he alone is God, and that there is none beside him, and none like him; and that Jesus Christ is his only, beloved Son, and therefore cannot be that God whose Son he is; and that the Holy Spirit is his own Spirit, which he sends, gives, and communicates, according to his own will and pleasure, and so cannot be personally an independent God, or third person of God. We have therefore double proof, negative and positive, against the truth of these affirmations, and of course in favor and support of the true orthodoxy and faith which was once delivered to the saints.

But I will digress for a moment to state a serious and solemn case. I will suppose—for it is not impious to imagine what may take place on a great occasion in another, more glorious, perfect world, where there will be no mistake, or error, or controversy—I will suppose, at the great day of judgment, a sincere, devout Christian comes up to the bar of the Judge of all the earth, and humbly addresses the Judge, as the self-existent, supreme God. And what may we presume will be the reply of the Judge? From what he taught, while on

earth, we may believe he will in a most affectionate manner say to him: "My dear, beloved disciple, you are mistaken: you have honestly, unintentionally obtained wrong views of me and my Father, for I am *not* the self-existent, supreme God. I never so taught while I was on earth; but I always declared that my Father was greater than I, and that he was the only true, supreme God, and that I was no more than his only beloved Son, deriving my being, and all that I was, and all my powers, from him—that I could do nothing of myself, but that he had given me all power in heaven and earth, and by him I was made the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. And this great truth of my sonship I maintained before all the people, before Jews and Gentiles, Scribes and Pharisees, and doctors of the law, and, at the known peril of my life, before Pontius Pilate. And for my adherence to this great truth I was most unjustly, cruelly, scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross and crucified! But my Father justified me and glorified me—raised me from the tomb, and triumphantly exalted me at his own right hand, on the throne of his glory. And as the Son of God, and by the

power and will of my Father, I now here live and reign, and am appointed the final Judge of all the earth. And now, my beloved disciples, I, your Judge, do not condemn you for your unintentional errors and mistaken views. I freely forgive you. I condemn none for mere errors of opinion. All whose hearts are right with God, and who have true, cordial faith in me and in the grace of God, I, with joy and love, receive and admit into my glorious kingdom, which my Father hath given me for an everlasting kingdom, where they may enjoy unspeakable happiness and glory with me for ever and ever!"

But to return, and to conclude, I ask seriously, have we not fully demonstrated, by the word of God himself, who "cannot lie" or deceive, and by the testimony of Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness, and by the declaration of the inspired Apostle Paul, that the three affirmations aforesaid, (viz.) that God Almighty is a tri-personal God, and that his Son is self-existent and supreme God—and the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) is separately, personally, God, the third person of God, cannot be true; neither of them can be true if the Word of God is true, and if the testimony of

the Son of God, the faithful and true Witness, and of the inspired Apostle Paul, is true? (and who will dare to attempt to invalidate or impeach such divine testimony?) But it must follow that the opposite doctrine, which we call the true orthodoxy and faith, is strictly true, and well supported by the highest possible divine testimony, which cannot be invalidated or impeached; and has been adopted and held by all the early Christians and fathers of the church of the first centuries, and by a great many of the most pious and learned men and orthodox Christians to this day. And I would to God that all his intelligent creatures on earth might receive and believe in this true orthodoxy, and be all united, and be one in Christ, in heart and soul, in mind and deed, and all be willing, in love and good fellowship, to go to heaven together; and not with bitterness and controversy, in sectarian divisions.

Now, if it is possible that there may be some persons who are not willing to take the Holy Scriptures for the sole guide and director of their faith and practice, I will refer them to the laws of nature, reason and common sense, which I will call attributes of men and in-



estimable gifts of God, and are useful to direct men in the right way; and to some extent they are as truly instruments of God's revelation as his holy Word, though not so full and perfect; but what they do truly teach should be received, and must harmonize with the Word of God; for God cannot reveal anything in one way, or by one instrument, and contradict it in another, "for all his ways are perfect and harmonious." Now, what do these attributes teach, or tell us? or, what do they not teach?

Have nature, reason and common sense, ever discovered or informed us that there was any one being in heaven or earth that was three persons, or that had two natures? No. They teach that every living intelligent person or being, is, strictly, a unit, one person, and can have but one nature. Do nature, reason and common sense teach that the only true God and his Spirit are two separate, distinct persons, and equal supreme Gods—or that the one only God can be a first and a third person of God? Or do they teach that the Son of God can be that God whose Son he is, or that any Son can be his own father? No. They teach no such thing. What then

do they teach? They teach one supreme God in one person—they teach one truly Son of God, with one nature only—teach one Holy Spirit of God, not a third personal God—they teach all that the Word of God has revealed, though not so full and perfect—they teach all that the true orthodox faith claims to hold. It is true, they may be corrupted or perverted; but if they are not, they are as truly the instruments of God for good, and for our guidance, as the Bible is, though not so high, holy, and perfect. Their true and proper office is to harmonize with and support the Bible, and not to invalidate, control, or contradict it.

Believing, therefore, as I do, that the true orthodox faith is fully established by the word of God, and the dictates of nature, reason, and common sense, I must, while I live, support and maintain it as much as in my power. But I do not suppose that this treatise will meet the full, entire views of the present orthodoxy, so called, or of any of the prevailing denominations of Christians; yet I truly believe that it is fully and exactly the true, old, apostolic orthodoxy, and the only orthodoxy, or theological truth, that was ever known or re-

ceived, anywhere, before the fourth century; and it is, also, substantially in perfect agreement with true, evangelical unitarianism—there is no difference, except in the use of a few non-essential words. And I do, also, seriously believe, that if our brethren of the present orthodoxy would come back to their old apostolic Orthodoxy, all other Christians of all denominations would cheerfully, charitably come up to them, and harmoniously unite with them in establishing one only church of God upon earth—as there is, and ever will be, but one in heaven! And so may heaven commence here! O, roll on, such a blessed day!

## DISCOURSE ON JOB.

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Of all the ancient sacred writings, the Book of Job is one of the most interesting, instructive, learned, godly, sublime productions of the Old Testament. But many believe that it is not founded upon facts, or real history or biography, but is only an allegory ; and I will give some of their reasons for this belief, without giving any opinion of my own.

In the first place, they say it does not appear natural, or probable, that God would have suffered Satan, his greatest enemy, whom he had, for his rebellion, as we are told, cast out of heaven down to hell, and there, (as Milton represents,) “ chained on the burning lake, to remain unreprieved, unpitied, ages of hopeless end.” It does not, they say, appear probable, if possible, that God would have permitted the vilest rebel to break his chains and re-ascend to heaven, and unite himself with the sons of God, and with them to present himself before the Lord ; or that the sons of God would meet with him ; or that

the great Jehovah would condescend to hold a familiar conversation with the vilest condemned rebel, (as represented,) and suffer him, in the most cruel manner, and unlimitedly, (except that he should spare the life of Job,) to afflict and torment his servant Job, "a perfect and upright man, one who feared God and eschewed evil." It does not seem consistent with the just and merciful character of God, that a perfect and upright man should be cruelly afflicted and tormented at the instigation of the devil, or that God could be tempted by Satan to destroy, temporarily, the perfect Job without cause.

Again: it is said that it does not seem probable that even the most impudent Satan would have dared, if he could, to come up and join the sons of God, and present himself before that Almighty Lord who had justly cast him out of heaven down to hell, and that he should presume to reason with that Sovereign Lord, and charge him with partiality towards his upright servant Job, and should undertake to teach him how he should deal with Job to discover his hypocrisy.

And it is said that there is no account or revelation of any such meeting of the sons of



God and Satan to present themselves before the Lord, except what is in the Book of Job. Furthermore, it is said we have no history or biography in any other part of the Bible of Job or his three friends, or the learned young Elihu. And if there ever had been, in any part of the world, at any time, such remarkable, learned, godly men, as they are in this book represented to be, there must have been some history, biography or revelation of them given in some sacred or profane history. And as we have in the historical part of the Bible full characters, connections and biographies given of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, and other distinguished men of old, and can find no biography, nothing of Job or of his supposed three friends, or Elihu, it may be fairly presumed that no such real persons ever lived ; and that the whole Book of Job is but an allegory—an inspired, God-given allegory, it must be—but not the less valuable or instructive on that account. Our blessed Saviour's parables, or allegories, were not perhaps generally founded upon facts, or real history or biography; but they were more interesting, valuable, useful and convincing, than any other instruc-

tions and teaching ever given at that day—they were indeed the words of God, delivered by his beloved Son, who said that the words he spoke were not his own, but his Father's, who sent him. So, if the words of the Book of Job were written by divine inspiration, they must be the words of God. And without dwelling upon doubtful or non-essential points, I do fully believe that the Book of Job is an inspired book, agreeable to the will of God ; and that it may be made “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ;” and that the character of Job is highly worthy of imitation.

But who was the writer of this valuable book is not known, and cannot now be known. I think it could not have been the extemporaneous production of the persons therein named, but must have been a work, a poem it seems to be, of much thought, deliberation, and deep study. Some have conjectured that Job himself was the sole author ; but I think this is doubtful, as we have no evidence to prove it. Some have thought that one of the three friends, or Elihu, was the writer ; but this, for the same reason, may be doubted. Some have also conjectured that Jeremiah was the writer ;

but this I doubt, because I believe it was written before Jeremiah's day. So I will now make my own conjecture, which is, that it was written by Moses when he was feeding the flocks of Jethro, and had ample time for meditation and contemplation, and when it seems God was with him. And we have no account of any man in ancient times so able, and so likely to be the author, as Moses, for he was taught in all the science of Egypt, and, moreover, was taught and inspired of God, and was one of the most important servants God ever had in the world, excepting only his beloved Son. I think, therefore, that it is very probable that Moses was the writer of the Book of Job.

But it is no matter to us who was the writer of that book, so long as we believe that it is of Divine inspiration and properly ingrafted into the Bible, which is truly, substantially, the Word of God.

I will therefore waive all allegorical discussion, and, for the purpose of instruction and improvement, consider Job, and his three friends and Elihu, as real godly, learned persons who lived about the time of Abraham; at least (as I conclude from the number of years of his life) after Noah and before Moses. And I will en-

deavor to make some useful remarks and reflections upon the words of our text, and some other matters and things referred to in this book, and in particular as to the character and example of Job. Job says in our text: "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, then it gave witness to me." These words were spoken by Job in the midst of his sore affliction and distress; when the hand of God had touched him; when his substance had been destroyed; when the providence of God had removed from him all the comforts and enjoyments of life: but they were spoken of him in reference to the time when he was in a high state of prosperity and happiness; when God preserved him and blessed him; when his candle shined upon him; when, by his light, he walked through darkness; when the Almighty was yet with him; when the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him; when his children were about him; when he was respected and praised by all his acquaintance; when the young men, when they saw him, hid themselves, the old men arose and stood up, the princes refrained talking, and the nobles held their peace; when his substance was very great, and he was con-

sidered the greatest of all the men of the East; and when God had declared that there was none like him in all the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil. In reference to this happy period of Job's life, he said, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, then it gave witness to me;" smiled upon me, and gave comfort and joy to my soul. And why was it so? what was the cause thereof? Job tells us: It was "because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him—because I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. It was because I put on righteousness, and it clothed me, my judgment being as a robe and a diadem—because I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame—because I was a father to the poor—because I wept for him that was in trouble, and my soul was grieved for the poor—because I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoils out of his teeth—and because God had made me a just and perfect man, and caused me to fear him and eschew evil."

Such were some of the causes that produced the blessed effects of love, esteem and praise towards Job, and added, undoubtedly, to his



happiness. And may we not believe, may we not calculate with certainty, that the same causes, if existing, will produce similar effects, in all ages, upon all good men?

Let us then endeavor to turn this subject to our own benefit and improvement. Let us inquire if there are not objects now in existence that may produce similar effects to those referred to. "Come, let us reason together." If we deliver the poor that cry, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him; if we, as much as in our power, deliver them from their oppressors, relieve them of their burdens, supply their wants, heal their sicknesses, give them needed consolation, and teach them, at all times, under all circumstances, resignation, and the practice of all moral and religious duties—will not their ears, their whole souls bless us? Will not their eyes speak their love and gratitude? And will not the ears and eyes of all who hear or see of our kind deeds bless us, and smile with approbation upon us? And shall we not meet the acceptance of him who is the Almighty Father of the fatherless, and the Friend of the destitute and afflicted? And shall we not make the objects of our kindness happy, and, in consequence, enjoy the same blessing ourselves?

And if we (figuratively speaking) cause the widow's heart to sing for joy—if we visit, console and comfort them in their afflictions and bereavements, provide for their comfort, convenience and happiness—shall we not receive their blessing, and the approbation of him who is the widow's God and Judge?

Again: if we put on righteousness—if we are truly righteous in deed as well as in profession, so that it may be said that our works of righteousness clothe us as a beautiful robe and a diadem—may we not expect that all good men will praise and bless us, and that the righteous Judge of all the earth will amply reward us?

Again: if we make ourselves, as it were, a substitute of eyes to the blind and of feet to the lame—if we become guides to those who are deprived of the blessed light of the sun, afford them all the aid and assistance, and give them all the knowledge in our power, and display before the eyes of their minds the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ—and if to the lame we administer relief, lead them in the path of truth and righteousness—may we not expect to receive their blessing? And shall we not be imitators of our blessed Saviour, who went

about doing good, giving sight to the blind and soundness to the lame? And have we not a promise, that in no such case shall we lose our reward? Again: if, like Job, we are a father to the poor, if we provide for their necessities and comfort, if we show them kindness and pity, we may expect not only their blessing, but also a blessing from our compassionate Father in heaven; for we read in the sacred volume, "He that giveth his bread to the poor shall be blessed—he lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he (the Lord) pay him again."

The character given of Job in his early prosperity is worthy of all imitation. He is represented to be possessed of great wealth; but he considered it all as the gift of God, or rather as a loan, which God had a right to take away whenever he pleased. And notwithstanding his immense worldly possessions, Job seemed not to put his trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth all things richly to enjoy, and which made him thankful and devoted to the service of God, and to the worship of him supremely; to become himself perfect and upright, and to fear God and eschew evil. He also looked well to the ways of his house-

hold, to their moral and godly character—he made supplications continually, and offered sacrifices to God for his sons, fearing that they might have committed sins; and he made a good and benevolent use of the wealth which God had loaned him. He delivered and provided for the poor that cried and were in want—he fed the hungry and clothed the naked; he supplied the fatherless, and helped those that had none to help them but were ready to perish; by liberal provision he made the widow's heart to sing for joy; he provided for the blind and lame; he was like a father to the poor; he prevented the wicked from injuring the righteous; he was kind and provident to all in distress or want; he put on righteousness, and it clothed him—his judgment was to him as a robe and a diadem; and he did extensive good to his fellow-creatures. And above all, he was an approved servant of God, and by him pronounced to be a perfect and upright man, who feared God and eschewed evil.

And where upon earth can be found an object more interesting, more noble, more excellent, more praiseworthy, than a very rich man who is perfect and upright, who feareth God and escheweth evil, worships him supremely,

praises and extols him continually; who, notwithstanding his great worldly possessions, puts not his trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth all things richly to enjoy; who uses his riches for the glory of God and the good of mankind, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, supplies the wants of the poor and destitute, provides for the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and does good to all according to their need; who believes that to whom God has given much, of them he will require much; who believes that it is his duty to use the wealth which God has given him, not only for his glory, but also for the good of his fellow-men; and that such was the design and will of God in the bestowment of riches, and that he must render an account of how he has used the riches which God has given him. Such a person may well be considered a true disciple of Christ, who, though he appeared on earth to be in poverty, yet was immensely rich; for he had all power in heaven and earth given him of his Father; he possessed the everlasting riches of heaven, and was interested in the throne of God, being there seated at the right hand of his Almighty Father!

Would to God that all the rich men and wo-



men of our day and generation were such as I have described—were like what the godly Job is represented to have been. Such men and women, all united, might produce a great and wonderful change and happy revolution in the world. They might cause the wants and all the reasonable desires of all, of every intelligent creature on earth to be fully supplied; for God in his infinite wisdom and goodness has created substance, wealth, and riches enough to supply all the wants of his creatures, if they will but make a right, just, and good use and distribution thereof. The all-wise, all-good God never could create or cause to be more creatures than he hath provided means for their support, if they will use the means, and perform the labor, skill and industry which God and nature require of them. Then what a world this would be! No—it would not be *this world*; but it would be this *once* sinful world changed into a happy, blessed heaven on earth! and all the inhabitants thereof would become like the angels of God! What encouragement, therefore, there is for rich men and women to be and do what they ought to be and do, and what God designed them for, for their good and his glory.

Another important, imitable trait in Job's character is his patience and resignation in adversity, in deprivations, in bodily pains, distress and agony. Nowhere, in ancient or modern times, have we any account of any person whose adversity, deprivations and sufferings were so great, so unendurable as Job's are represented to have been. We read that on a certain day, when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the asses were feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away ; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword." And another messenger came and said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them." And then there came the third, and said, "The Chaldeans made three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away." And then came the fourth, and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon

the young men, and they are dead ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee!"

And how did Job conduct himself on this distressing occasion? Did he rave like a madman or a fool? No: he was calm, submissive; he humbled himself, he fell down on the ground and worshiped, and said, "Naked came I from the earth, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

But here was not the end of Job's calamity. It seems that Satan was not satisfied with the evil he had already been the means of bringing upon Job, and he was probably dissatisfied in that he had not caused Job to sin against his Maker. And to move the Lord to permit him further to injure and distress Job, he says to the Lord, (rather insolently,) "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life—(a life of ease and comfort, free from pain)—but put forth now thy hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." And, strange as it may seem to us, the Lord said unto Satan, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life"—that was

all the restriction that was laid upon Satan. "So went forth Satan from the presence of the Lord"—and, undoubtedly with infernal joy, smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to his crown."

And how did Job behave himself in this extremity of distress? Did he profanely curse and take the name of God in vain? No: he was resigned, humble; he "sat down among the ashes;" his grief was too great for utterance; "he opened not his mouth," till his wife, speaking contemptuously of his integrity, bid him "curse God and die." Then Job opened his mouth and rebuked her, and said, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish (wicked) women speaketh: what, shall we receive good of the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil without murmuring or complaining against him?" In all this did not Job sin with his lips, nor utter one complaining word; though he undoubtedly meditated, thought, and said to himself, "It is the Lord who hath done it—who hath permitted all these evils to come upon me. Let him do what seemeth him good; I know that he must do right, and what finally will be best for me. And I trust that I shall not be condemned and finally cast off;

for I know that my Redeemer liveth ; and though worms will destroy this body, yet in my spirit shall I see God as he is—a God of infinite goodness, love and mercy towards all his intelligent creatures.”

There are many other things, as they are represented in the character of Job, worthy of all notice and imitation. But I have not time now to enumerate them : I can only recommend the study and often reading of the Book of Job. And I will add, if you are, or have been, or should be, in any degree afflicted and distressed as Job is represented to have been, like him be patient and resigned, and murmur not against the providence of God ; be perfect and upright, fear God, and eschew evil ; and then you may hope and expect, through the grace of God, a restoration (if not an addition thereto) of all the comforts, blessings and happiness you may have lost ; and hereafter to meet this godly, earthly sufferer, and an innumerable company of the earthly afflicted, and of angels and glorified spirits, in that happy, glorious kingdom, where there will be no losses, no disappointments, no sorrow, grief or pain ; but where there will be nothing but fullness of joys and holy pleasures evermore !



LECTURE

ON

SACRED, CHURCH, AND SOCIAL MUSIC.

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It is my intention, on this occasion, to take a brief retrospective view of the history of the art and science of music—to speak of its use and importance in private associations and in public worship—to consider some of its general principles, powers, effects and influence, and the propriety and duty of cultivating and improving the science, in order to improve the mind and meliorate the heart.

Most of the arts and sciences have been discovered, invented, first known or used, within the memory of man, human tradition, or the records of history. But who is old enough to tell, what tradition has handed down to us, or what history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, or even fabulous, can clearly inform us, when the delightful, holy art of music first was—first charmed the ear, cheered

the mind, enlivened the spirits, meliorated the affections, heightened the social enjoyments of life, inspired devotion, and raised the soul to heaven?

But though we may not be able to tell when this art first existed, or when the science first apparently began its progress, yet we may, perhaps with some profit and pleasure, take a brief retrospective view of its history, approximate towards its origin, and consider some of its principles, powers and effects upon the minds, hearts and lives of men.

It may be well to bear in mind the distinction between an art and a science. An art is the gift of nature, or of nature's God, which may be greatly improved by practice only. Science is knowledge, or art improved by precepts founded on principles; it is the regulation and advancement of art, according to rules, restrictions and various artificial adaptations. A person may possess the art of music without knowing anything of the science; and one may have the science and possess nothing of the art—be unable to execute a single strain with taste. The birds of the air have the art of music, while they are not taught and are incapable of being taught.

the science. But music now may be considered both an art and a science, productive of the most exquisite delight.

Whatever may be said of the sweetness, simplicity and nature of the music or melody of the early ages, it is an undoubted fact, that sacred music is now in a higher state of perfection than it ever was before. Throughout the civilized world, especially in the larger towns and cities, it is performed with good taste, great skill and harmony. Instruments have been multiplied to suit all occasions and please all ears ; and the human voice has been modulated and attuned, approximating towards perfection.

Still, however, the present age cannot claim the merit of discovering the art, or first teaching the science. And here let me observe, that though in modern music there is great science, much refinement, apparent good taste and perfection displayed—though the rules of harmony are well and strictly observed, yet, in my opinion, many of the late compositions and productions are not so exquisite, so devotional, so solemn, so well adapted for church music, as some of former times. And let me urge all teachers and leaders of sacred music, in their

selections for the church service, to choose such pieces as are simple, devotional, solemn and impressive. The object of sacred music is not to tickle the ear, to delight the fancy, or to excite a momentary, noisy joy, but to warm and meliorate the heart, to calm the tumults of the soul, to kindle a steady, lasting flame of holy love, and to elevate all our affections heavenward. Enough of this kind of devotional music (if our own manufactory is deficient) may be found among the choice fruits and devotional productions of Pleyel, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Handel, and others of former days, who seemed to be almost heaven-inspired men. Yet these great masters of music never claimed to be the discoverers of the art, or the first who studied, taught and practised the science in which they so greatly excelled. It had been in common use and high estimation for centuries before. Even before the invention of printing, in the fifteenth century, the state of music had been improving for several centuries. Even through the dark ages of science we find some kind of music in use among every people of whom we have any history. And it might be interesting to take a view of the progress and effect of music

in Rome, Greece and Egypt; but as their music was mostly of a secular and warlike kind, I will pass it over as not appropriate to this occasion, and confine our consideration chiefly to sacred music, or the music of which we have an account in the Bible. We will briefly retrace and glance over the sacred history on this subject.

We are assured that music was practised by the Apostles of Christ, after his resurrection, on various occasions. Paul and Silas, in prison and in chains, sang praises to God; and the divine approbation was fully manifested by their immediate, miraculous deliverance. And our Lord himself, before his passion, when he instituted a new, affectionate, holy ordinance of remembrance, together with his disciples, sang a hymn. We are not informed of what style the music was, but it must have been pure and exquisite, for the Leader of the choir was one who spake and sang as never man spake or sang. He was, indeed, a man in appearance, but he was truly the Son of God, at whose advent upon earth, we are informed, there was heard music of a most exalted, sublime, celestial character—for, “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the



heavenly host, praising God and singing, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." But though this was an event that showed the amazing, astonishing love and mercy of God, yet it was not the first instance of musical praise on earth ; for centuries before, the prophets, who prophesied of this great event, seemed to be inspired with the gift of music as well as of prophecy. And it was practised by idolatrous nations, by those who worshiped the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of wood and of stone. The great and impious Nebuchadnezzar, at his blasphemous worship in the height of his power, made great musical displays. And when, in contempt of the true God, he had made an image of gold of immense size, he decreed and caused it to be proclaimed: "To you it is commanded, O people, nations and languages, that at what time ye shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up." Horrid, impious prostitution of the celestial charms of music !

And long before the time of Nebuchadnezzar the Jews used various music, in their worship

of the true God, and on other occasions. Solomon, in his day, the wise king of Israel, was surrounded with "men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts." It is said that the number of his songs was a thousand and five. And Josephus tells us that "he made two hundred thousand trumpets and forty thousand other instruments of music, to record and praise God with at the dedication of the temple." But though Solomon was directly endowed by the Almighty with wisdom, knowledge, wealth and honor, such as no king had before him—so that there was none like him in all the earth—yet the gift of music was not first bestowed in his time ; for we find that his father, David, the sweet singer of Israel, was enraptured with its charms ; that he was a most skillful performer on various instruments, and much of his time was devoted to holy and delightful songs of praise to God : "Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O, thou holy one of Israel !" But though David was the best, the most ardent and devout musician of the ancients, yet he was not the first ; we have recorded many accounts of music before his day. But without noticing them all, we

will revert to the first and one of the most sublime hymns or anthems of praise of the Supreme Being to be found on sacred record, which was performed with voices and instruments with triumphant rapture. After the wonderful and miraculous deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song : " I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders !" And the women also took a part in this triumphant song : " And Miriam, the prophetess, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her ; and Miriam answered them : " Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ! the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea !"

And nearly three hundred years before this time both vocal and instrumental music were in use. Laban, complaining against Jacob for fleeing away secretly, said unto him, " Why didst thou not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp ?"

And even long before the flood, we read of

instruments of music, and of a certain musical family. Jubal, the sixth descendant of Cain, was called the "father of all such as handle the harp and the organ."

Before this time we have no express mention of human music. But as there is no account given of who was the father, or first performer of vocal music, it is to be presumed that it was in use before instrumental. And we well may imagine, as Milton has most beautifully conceived, that our first parents in paradise were delightfully employed in pure, simple, holy songs of praise to their great Creator; and that beholding the beauty, glory, and majesty of his works around them, they devoutly sang:

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,  
Almighty! Thine, this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair! Thyself how wondrous then!  
Unspeakable! Who sits above these heavens,  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these, thy lower works, yet these declare  
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine!"

Indeed, our world at its first creation seems, as it were, to have been ushered into being and honored by a perfect band of glorious music from heaven, for "then the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Yes,

“From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
Creation first began—from harmony  
To harmony, through all the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing full in man.”

But from history we can retrace our subject no further; we can now retrograde only in the delightful field of fancy, and imagine that for ages of ages, million of millions of years before this world was, angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim were, and ever will be, continually employed in celebrating the praises of the Most High, with music the most sweet, sublime and rapturous—with never-ending anthems, hosannas, and hallelujahs to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

We are therefore led to conclude that music is of divine, celestial origin; that it was a gift of God to men upon earth, to be a source of comfort, delight and happiness throughout all ages; and the most noble and effectual means of celebrating the praises of the Giver. Surely, then, we may say it was the first art known on earth; and that it is and ever will be the most delightful employment of all the inhabitants of heaven.

Under these devout impressions, if time would



permit, much might be said on the principles, powers, effects and influences of music, and the propriety, use and duty of cultivating and improving the science.

Nature seems to have established an interesting connection between the emotions of the soul and the sense of hearing. The ear appears to be most intimately connected with the feelings of the heart; and this feeling expresses itself most readily in tones, or musical expressions; and all our intellectual sensibilities are affected or excited by something extraneous. The natural source of all music, of all sound, is that salutary, invisible element, without which the whole animal, and even vegetable creation would languish, wither and die. The air we breathe, and which supports our existence, is also the life of music. Could you place the most perfect and powerful instrument in a place entirely void of air, and have it touched by the most skillful hand, yet it would produce no music, no delightful sounds at all; it would be like the grave, silent; like faith without works, dead. But when this melodious, harmonious element is put in happy motion by the vibration of large and small strings of different length and tension, or impelled through pipes of different

length and sizes, or by the percussion of elastic bodies, or when it is breathed forth by the wonderful power and force of the human organs, it produces a certain compound of delightful sounds, which we call music. But although these sounds may be produced in an almost infinite variety of ways and methods, yet it is impossible for us to produce more than eight different tones, with their accompanying semitones; all the rest are in fact the same, only in an octave or octaves above or below. But in this octave of sounds there is a great mystery; some of the tones as connected with others being concords, or agreeable sounds, and others discords, or disagreeable, jarring sounds. The unison, fifth and eighth, and, though less perfect, the third, fourth, and sixth, are naturally concords; the second and seventh, and their octaves, are perfect discords. And do you ask, why were these discords incorporated into the system of music? of what use are they? and why were not all the tones made concords? Explain to me why the sun does not always shine equally bright upon us—why it is sometimes obscured by clouds and sometimes lost in midnight darkness—why our atmosphere is not always fair and clear—why there are storms,

tornadoes, thunders, lightnings and earthquakes—why all nature is not always calm, serene and peaceful as a summer's sea, when not a breath of wind flies o'er its surface—why in our world there are troubles, anxieties, sorrows, diseases and death; unfold all these, and other mysteries in the natural and moral world, and I will tell you why discords are in music, and what is the use thereof.

But though we cannot fully comprehend all the works and wonders of nature and Providence, yet from reason and revelation we know that infinite wisdom has arranged the whole system in the best possible manner; that there are no seeming imperfections in nature that may not be of some service, or teach us some useful lesson. So some discords in music are not useless: they enhance and give additional pleasure to the charms and delights of the concords—as occasional darkness makes the light doubly interesting, as storms and tempests make a clear day wonderfully delightful, and as the troubles, evils and disappointments of this life make the hopes of heaven glorious. They also teach us practical lessons—that the world, as well as the musical gamut, contains discords and many disagreeable things; that

we ourselves are not perfect and concordant; that we are often in discord with the strict rules of virtue and holiness; that we are sometimes at seconds and sevenths with the good of our fellow-creatures and the honor of the Creator; that even professed Christians are not always in unison and concord with one another; that we are not naturally inclined to continue and rest satisfied with an uninterrupted, long succession of perfect concords and unmixed delights, while here contending with a variety of evils; that as the best pieces of music, for earthly performance, contain some discords, so our best services here are mixed with imperfections.

But as our system of music contains more concords than discords, (by three to one,) it does not tend to prove the strange doctrine (held by some) of a total, native depravity of human nature; that all men are by nature wholly incapable of being or doing good, or even of thinking one good thought. But doubting whether this doctrine can be proved by any of the sciences, or by reason or revelation, I must reject it from the musical gamut, and refer it to the Society of Mystics.

But while I would not degrade our natures

(those natures God has graciously given us) too low, I would not exalt them too high, nor claim for them any merit. If there are any concord, any harmony, any love, any virtue, any noble, generous, devout, holy affections in our natures, we will take no merit to ourselves; therefore we will give all the praise, all the credit, all the glory, to the benevolent AUTHOR of our natures, the Father of our spirits, the Giver of every good gift. "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord." But men should not undervalue the good gifts of God.

Much might be said upon the effects, powers and influence of music; and more may be *felt* than can be expressed. Pure, solemn, holy music is inexpressibly felt in the soul. It is not chiefly intended to enlighten the head, but to warm the heart with love to God and men.

If we place reliance upon history, ancient music, though the most simple, was most powerful and effective. David with his harp seemed to have power to meliorate the bad passions, to heal diseases of the mind, and to drive away the evil spirit. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit was upon Saul, David took an harp and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed and was well; and the evil spirit eparted from him."



Sacred music, in David's time, seemed to produce the most pleasant and holy affections. "I will sing unto the Lord," said David, "for it is good and it is pleasant, and praise is comely." "I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing." It was by music and prayer that David constantly worshiped his God; and should not his example be followed by all men? Sacred music may be considered the language of the heart. It is peculiarly adapted for private and public worship; to soften, warm and meliorate the heart; to elevate and enliven the soul in joy; to comfort and support the mind in sorrow, and to move all the affections with love and gratitude for mercies received, and with grief and repentance for sins committed. There is no holy, generous, noble passion that may not be enhanced by the influence of appropriate music.

Many of the ancient nations, though, compared with us, rude and barbarous, yet were much devoted to music, and practiced it in their worship and on other occasions. The Greeks had the most extravagant faith in the power and influence of music. They believed it was the sure supporter of virtue, and the principal reward of the blessed; that a neglect

of it was the father of cruelty, and would be the destruction of government; that the best performers could, at pleasure, excite and control all the passions, cure the sick, and raise the dead to life. But without dwelling upon ancient men and things, let us consider what we ourselves know and feel to be the social and divine effects of this celestial art. The first simple effect of domestic music, is to lull the infant child to sleep and rest, (here nature tells of music's charms;) and then, with tender notes, to swell the growing mind to love, and gratitude, and praise. It also may make the solitary one devotionally social with himself and his God. But the great and general power of music over the minds of a rational, moral and religious people, is to equalize the temper, to check and regulate extravagant joys, and to exalt and enliven the soul when too much depressed. The poet says:

“ By music minds an equal temper know ;  
Nor swell too high, nor sink too low :  
If in the breast tumultuous joys arise,  
Music her soft, assuasive voice applies;  
Or, when the soul is pressed with cares,  
Exalts her in enlivening airs.”

It also has a tendency to cheer the sorrowful and desponding, to rouse and awaken the

drowsy and slothful, to cure the poison of envy, and "to make man mild and sociable to man;" for at the performance of appropriate music,

"Melancholy lifts her head,  
Morpheus rouses from his bed,  
Sloth unfolds her arms, and wakes;  
Listening Envy drops her snakes."

But the highest, most salutary, noble, glorious power of music, is to fit the soul for divine, devout contemplation, praise and delight; to warm the heart with love, and lift the soul to heaven. Yes, all

"Our joys below it can improve,  
And antedate the bliss above:  
This the divine Cecilia found,  
And to her Maker's praise confined the sound."

In fine, there is no rational subject, there is no pleasing scene, no present joys, no hopes of future bliss, that may not be enhanced and rendered doubly interesting by the use of appropriate music. Our private meditations, our domestic comforts, our social amusements, our innocent, convivial entertainments, our heroic feelings, our patriotic celebrations, and, above all, our most holy devotions, are all warmed, enlivened, enlarged, elevated by the irresistible charms of music.

From the view we have taken of this subject, we must acknowledge the propriety, usefulness and duty for every one to cultivate and practice sacred music. And it is a pleasing duty; it is a delightful, noble, celestial employment—an employment in which Moses, and David, and Solomon, and Jesus Christ, and his apostles took a part on earth, and in which angels and glorified spirits are and ever will be ardently engaged in heaven for ever.

But it should be considered that the music acceptable to the ear of harmonic perfection, is the music of the soul, the holy vibrations of the heart. We must sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also; we must make melody in our hearts as well as with our voices and instruments, to please the great Author of all harmony. All our affections, all our powers must be sweetly attuned and harmonized to grateful notes of praise and glory to God, to meet his approbation. And may he grant, that when we have done attempting to sound his praise here on earth, we may be admitted to unite with thousands of thousands and ten times thousand of angels and glorified spirits, in celebrating with rapture the high praises of Him who sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever!

## BIGOTRY AND EXCLUSIVENESS.

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“And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us, is on our part,” (is with us.) Mark, ix. 38-40.

In the first place we will consider (though it may not be of the highest importance) what must be meant by casting out devils, or being possessed of a devil, or having a devil or devils, as stated in the New Testament.

Upon this subject we can only conjecture, for we have no particular account given of immaterial, evil, spiritual beings, or what a devil in man is, or must be, or in what way or manner he or it may be cast out, removed or cured. It must have been effected, I imagine, by a miraculous work; for it seems that Christ had given the twelve, and probably the seventy, and perhaps others, power and directions to perform miraculous works, “to cast out unclean



spirits, to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." And he directed them "to go and preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils; do all in my name."

The devil, or Satan, is generally considered to be the chief or leader of those wicked, rebellious angels who most provokingly sinned and revolted against God in heaven, and were by him cast down to hell—"there to remain, (as Milton hath conceived) unrespited, unreprieved, unpitied, ages of hopeless end." And we are not informed what number of companions and associates he had in his rebellion.

But I conjecture that this term is frequently used in the Bible in a figurative sense; that among the Jews (for the Jews were a superstitious people, Paul said to the Athenians, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious,") all malignant sicknesses, diseases, and inflictions of body and mind, all idiotism, epilepsy, all lunacy, all leprosy, maniacism, and every species of derangement and madness which it was supposed could not be cured, removed, or cast out by any human power or skill, but by a miraculous, divine work, were

by the Jews considered to be devils or evil spirits, that had somehow or other, "*per fas, aut nefas*," got into men or women to control and torment them, and that all persons who were thereby afflicted or possessed were supposed to be possessed of a devil, which could not be cast out or cured but by miraculous power and wisdom.

And there are now in the world, confined in prisons and penitentiaries, many hundreds, yea thousands of persons, who are very like in every respect those who, when Christ was upon earth, were said to be possessed of a devil, yet no one now considers such persons so possessed. And I cannot imagine that any human being can have or be possessed of any such real, personal spirit in these days, in this world, or that such ever was *literally* the case; but I do believe that all the aggravated, abominable sins, all the malignant, horrid sicknesses, unclean diseases, and all supposed incurable afflictions of men, both of body and mind, are figuratively described in the New Testament as devils or evil spirits in the possession of men; but they are not all brought upon mankind by real personal evil spirits, but by the mysterious, wise, though to us unsearchable providence of

God. Nor can I conceive that our wise, merciful Father in heaven would allow those real rebellious spirits, whom he had sentenced and sent to hell, to come up personally to this world to vex and torment his favored creatures, whom he had made in his own image and likeness, and for whom he had such amazing love that he sent his beloved, only begotten Son into the world even to suffer and die, that he might bless and save them.

It appears to me utterly improbable that the merciful God would have suffered seven real personal devils to take possession of the *pious* Mary Magdalene to vex and torment her, and I cannot believe that the all-wise God has given the devil or devils power to direct and control his holy providence.

I cannot therefore, upon full consideration, believe that any real personal devils or evil spirits did *literally* possess men or women, as verbally stated in the New Testament; but I adapt a figurative meaning to the account, which I think is more consistent with what we can learn from the Word of God and the dictates of reason. But all this is a matter of speculation, and non-essential to be much considered; so I will come to a more important, prac-

tical, and useful examination and illustration of other parts of our text.

Probably it was after the twelve had returned from the mission on which Christ had sent them, that John said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us,"—did not agree with us in all our creeds, and do entirely as we thought right.

For this act John undoubtedly thought that they should receive the approbation of their Master. But instead of approbation, they received censure and rebuke; for Christ said to them, "Forbid him not; for there is no man who shall do a miracle or cast out a devil in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me, or deserve to be forbidden." And probably he said much more than what is recorded; for it is not to be supposed that all the precious words which Christ spoke while on earth are fully recorded.

It is probable that Christ then, in love, expatiated largely with his disciples—rebuked them seriously, and said to them, You have done very wrong—you have sorely grieved me—you have greatly displeased me—you had no more right to forbid that brother, as you say you did, than

he had to forbid you; for he is one whom I came into the world to comfort, bless and save; he is one of my messengers, one of my disciples, and your brother. I gave him miraculous power, and sent him out, as I did you, to cast out devils, to heal all manner of sicknesses and all manner of diseases, and to do many other miraculous works, all in my name; none of which he or you could do without my power and direction. And he was faithfully and conscientiously fulfilling his mission and doing my work when you unkindly forbade him. And the reason you have given for forbidding him is wholly insufficient; and you must repent of it, and then I will forgive you. You must be sensible that I never authorized you to forbid or reject any one who was engaged in my service, though he might not in all matters follow you, and adopt your views and dogmas. I never taught you to require men to follow *you*, but to follow me, and to receive my instructions, and to do my will, which is the will of my Father, and not to obey the will of man.

I never approved of an unkind or forbidding spirit in you toward any one who might differ from you. I always cautioned you against controversies and divisions among the brethren,



and bigotry and sectarianism in the church. I have urged you to be all one in love and in faith towards me, as the sure evidence that you are my true disciples. And how can you expect to become worthy, and to be admitted into my *one* loving, harmonious church in heaven, if you have a forbidding, bigoted, censorious spirit on earth? My beloved disciples, if you love me keep my commandments, and treasure up my instructions in your hearts, and I shall love you, and my Father will love you and bless you.

We are not informed who the one whom the disciples forbid, was : he might have been one of the seventy—at least he must have been one whom Christ had empowered and sent out on commission, as he did the twelve, or he could not have been doing the work of Christ, which the disciples unauthorizedly forbade him to do. It is probable that Christ informed his disciples who and what he was, and that he said to them, "Instead of forbidding him, you should have received him kindly, encouraged him in his good work which he was doing according to my instructions, and approved of him as a brother, no matter whether he followed you and agreed to your non-essential doctrines or not;

if he followed me and my instructions, that was enough to gain my approbation. And I would that all my disciples might do likewise, and that all my churches on earth might always be free from a forbidding, censorious spirit—that they all may be in harmony with each other, be one in love and faith in me, as their Redeemer and Saviour. I came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through me might be saved—might harmonize.

But it is most important that we should make a proper, useful and close application of this subject to ourselves, to the state and condition of Christianity, and the customs and rules of the churches now on earth—that we should diligently and faithfully inquire if there is any unchristian, forbidding, censorious spirit now prevailing among professed disciples of Christ; if any such spirit or root of bitterness is growing up in our churches, or among any professors of Christianity; if there is throughout the Christian world a general lack of that charity without which Paul said, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all

knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Such were St. Paul's views of charity, which he undoubtedly received by inspiration from his Master, who was all charity and perfect love.

Now let us fully examine and make close application of our subject, in the first place, to ourselves—first cast out the beam in our own eyes, that we may see clearly to pull out the mote in a brother's eye. Have we the same kind, friendly, Christian feelings towards Christians of another denomination, or family, as to our own? Do we cordially fellowship and commune with them as disciples and brethren of one common Lord and Master? Have we full charity and good-will towards them? Instead of forbidding, censuring and condemning them for not following us, or for some other non-essential matter, do we sympathize with them, encourage and aid them, and from the heart say to them, "God speed?" If we do not, then we have a forbidding, censorious spirit, and not the spirit of charity and of Christ in us.

And then, after closely applying the subject to ourselves, may we not, with candor and in love, make application of it to others—inquire if there are not some Christians, some whole sect or denomination, who will have no communion or fellowship with those who have not been baptized by immersion—who will not allow them, but forbid them to unite with them in the celebration of the Lord's supper? Must not such proceedings be entirely contrary to the injunctions and spirit of Christ, the Master? And should not they who adopt them consider Christ as saying to them, in his Gospel, "Forbid them not—debar them not. You have no more right to forbid and reject them, than they have to forbid and reject you. They and you should be one in love and spirit, as I and my Father are one."

Again: are there not some denominations who, if they do not forbid and reject all others, yet, without any good cause, select some one, two, or three denominations whom they condemn, forbid, and pronounce heretics and not worthy of the name of Christians; will have no communion or fellowship with them; will not allow their ministers or pastors to preach in their pulpits, or to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to their people? And can they who practice

such things, expect or even hope to receive the approbation of that Master whose love to men was stronger than death, for he willingly died to save them, and whose spirit and example they set at nought?

Again: are there not some Christians, some whole denomination of Christians, who assume that they are certainly right and that all others are in error; who adopt and establish certain creeds, catechisms and dogmas of human invention, for the rule and guide of their faith and practice, instead of the plain, unerring Word of God; and who condemn and anathematize all those Christians who cannot conscientiously receive and be governed by their unscriptural creeds—by their Calvinistic points, by all the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion—by their Athanasian absurdities and contradictions—by their triune God—by their double-natured Christ, and by many other strange dogmas, none of which can be found in the Word of God?

The evils of sectarianism and bigotry are most destructive to pure religion and the truth as it is in Jesus.

When our blessed Saviour was upon earth, he lamented and wept over Jerusalem for its sins and follies. Were he now on earth,



how would he lament and weep over his professed disciples for their divisions, controversies; their uncharitableness; their unkind feelings towards each other; their forbidding, censorious spirit, and their great departure from the teachings and example of their Master? How long will these evils remain? will they not cease? Yes, I do believe that Christ's prayer to his Father will be heard and answered; and I do believe that God in his great goodness, in his own due time, will bring about a great, happy, glorious change; will cause all Christians, all the sincere disciples of his Son, of every sect and denomination, to become one with him and his Son, in love and harmony—when they all shall be of one heart and one mind; when they all shall believe in, and worship supremely, the one God the Father, and receive into their hearts, with faith and love, the one Lord Jesus Christ, their blessed Saviour—when there will be no exclusiveness, no unkind feelings, no unchristian spirit prevailing—when holy praise shall unitedly ascend from all hearts and all lips; and when the devout, rapturous song shall echo throughout the world, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men!” O, roll on, roll on that happy, glorious day!

# THE SUPREME GOD, HIS SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.

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It is my design to try to show a brief way to prove, establish and maintain the true doctrine respecting the unity of God Almighty, the oneness and true sonship of Jesus Christ, and the true character and being or nature of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.

Upon the subjects above stated, much, very much has been said, and large volumes, and almost innumerable, have been written and published by good, great, and learned men, not, however, always harmoniously, but controversially. And they seem to have darkened counsel by words, rather than to have enlightened the mind by a bright display of "the truth as it is in Jesus." It is therefore my ardent desire, even at the age of eighty-seven years, to attempt to establish and support the true doctrine and facts upon these subjects in a few words, in a short space; and I hope it will not be con-

sidered as vanity in me to attempt such a great undertaking, (after all that has been published,) if the evidence I shall introduce shall appear to be infallible, clear, and conclusive, so that he who runs may read, and all ages can understand. And the principal evidence I shall offer will be the testimony of only *two infallible*, omniscient witnesses—no less than the only true, omniscient God, and his only beloved Son, the faithful and true Witness.

But I must first premise some things, that are agreed and cannot be denied. It is and it must be acknowledged, that the only true God cannot lie, or deceive, or declare, or proclaim anything but what is strictly true and right, and fully in harmony with his own perfect character; and that his Son, the faithful and true Witness, could not possibly testify and teach anything but the truth, which he was sent to declare.

Let us, then, candidly consider what these two infallible witnesses testify—what they fully declare and proclaim most solemnly.

The almighty, only true God has fully declared, solemnly, positively proclaimed of himself, "*I alone* am God ! and there is none else—none besides me, none with me ! there is no

God like me ! I am *the* Almighty God !" Many, very many such like proclamations may be found in the Word of God. And he never once proclaimed that he is three, or three persons in one God, or in any sense a triune being ! And if such was the truth, he, the righteous God, must have proclaimed it; he could not have used deception by withholding a truth most important for men to know, and which was fully known, if true, only to himself and his Son. And the Son, the faithful and true Witness, repeatedly, constantly taught, while on earth, the same doctrine which his omniscient Father had proclaimed of himself. He seemed to feel it of infinite importance that the true character of his father should be clearly made known; for in solemn prayer to him he said, "This is *life eternal*, to know *thee*, the *only* true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" into the world, "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

As to the oneness and true sonship of Jesus Christ, we have the testimony of the omniscient Father, who repeatedly declared of him, "This is my beloved Son, (not one of my sons,) my only begotten Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the Son himself many times declared of

himself, "I am the Son of God." He never said that he was only a man, or that he was God, the uncreated, supreme God; but he always affirmed that he derived his being from his Father; that he had no power or capacity but what was given him of his Father; that he could do nothing of himself, but that all power in heaven and earth was given him of his Father; that he lived by the Father, was dependent upon and obedient to him in all that he did or said. He seemed to have no separate will of his own, but always prayed to his Father that *his* will might be done.

And as to the Holy Spirit, we have ample testimony of God and of Christ that it is only the Spirit of God Almighty, and not separately God, or the third person of God, or any person at all; though, being the Spirit of God, it may well be called God, or be so considered; for the spirit of every being is the essence of that being, and may be viewed as that being himself, but not as another being. God frequently speaks of the Holy Spirit as his Spirit: "My Spirit," said God, "shall not always strive," etc. But it is nowhere, in the Old or New Testament, considered that the Holy Spirit is separately the self-existent, supreme God.



And Christ said he would send it. Therefore he must have considered it as an attribute of God or of himself, and not as the supreme God, for the supreme God is not *sendable*, could not be sent by the Son, for he is of himself, at all times, everywhere present.

Thus we have the testimony of the only true God and of his Son, the faithful and true Witness, and we might add (if necessary, but it seems not) that of the Apostle Paul, and the evidence of all nature and reason, to prove the strict unity of God the Father Almighty, the only true God, and the oneness and true sonship of Jesus Christ, and that the Holy Spirit is only the spirit of God Almighty, and not another separate God or person of God. And this is the only kind of evidence that is competent, that is admissible in the case. And is it possible that such evidence can be invalidated or overthrown? I think not—it must be conclusive—it must stand unshaken, though all the intelligent creatures of God on earth or in the whole universe should testify against it. The fallible cannot convict or falsify the infallible. And we can have no certain knowledge of God, but what we obtain from his Word or his works ; for who by (only)

searching can find out God—who can find out the Almighty to perfection?” Who, by invention and study, can discover the whole nature and character of the great, invisible, and, in some respects, incomprehensible God?

I would not now allude to the opposite doctrine (called trinitarian) as now held by a great majority of the Christian world, for the purpose of condemning those who honestly advocate and support it, for I believe they are sincere, though in an intellectual error; yet their hearts may be right with God, and zealously engaged in all religious duties. I have charity for them, and can cordially unite with them in religious worship, and in all the duties of life.

But I must consider this doctrine as now taught, that is, that the one only truly God is three, or three persons in one God, or a triune Being; and that Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, is God, even that God whose Son he is, (and this is an impossibility,) and by whom he lives, and receives all his powers and capacities; and that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, is separately another God or person, a third person in the Trinity. Such a doctrine, I most boldly say, cannot be supported at all by any

expressed evidence of the Word of God, or by the dictates of nature and reason. I can see no way to sustain this doctrine without rejecting the whole testimony of God and his Son, or making them liars or deceivers by declaring falsehoods, or withholding truths. Still, I believe, the advocates of this doctrine see, or think they see, their way clearly; I will not, I dare not presume to condemn them or judge them, lest I should do it wrongfully. Let the righteous Judge of all the earth, alone, decide their case and ours. And may we all, through his mercy and love, be acquitted, and received into his holy kingdom!

But let it be understood—in one word I say all—I do not condemn or reject any professed Christian of any denomination, for *opinions'* sake. I only wish them to try to be fully conformed to the Word of God and the laws of nature and reason, with abundance of charity and goodwill towards all men; to read and study the Bible *more*, and human invented creeds *less*; to live the life of Christ and love, and not of controversy and uncharitableness.

Great opposition to the views I have taken has arisen, I believe, from a prejudice that exists against the name of unitarian; and our

opponents seem to have endeavored to make that name unpopular. But this is very unreasonable in them; for the name is founded and derived entirely upon a belief and adoption of the unity of God. And all the opponents, all the so-called orthodox, profess to believe and hold to the unity of God: so they are, in fact, (though not nominally,) unitarians; but their unity is clouded, totally eclipsed by their mysterious, unscriptural, and naturally impossible to be true, *trinity in unity*. I do not wish them to change their name or denomination to unitarian. I only desire that they would examine candidly the essential, fundamental doctrines of unitarians, to see if they accord with the Holy Scriptures, which I believe they fully do; and I trust that such will be the decision of the righteous Judge of all the earth. A name is nothing worth, unless it embraces "the truth as it is in Jesus." We should not trust at all in names, but wholly in the goodness, and love, and mercy, of God and of Christ.

"God is not a being who requires to be worshiped by men's hands, as though *he needs* anything. Unitarians, I am satisfied, do not consider him such a being; and what *do* we understand that he requires of us, but to do

justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with him. He says, "I will have *mercy*, and not *sacrifice*;" compassion, kindness, benevolence towards one another, and not vain attempts to please *his eye* and *his ear*, as if he were a poor, vain man, or rather a child, to be tickled with tinsel and glitter. To *love him* with all the mind, soul and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, is, we are assured, better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices. In the view of such a Being, how infinitely superior must appear the spontaneous out-gushings of hearts overflowing with affection, gratitude, obedience, and humility, to the cold, vain repetitions of a formal service!

"I never could understand the use of a *book* even in a liturgical worship, excepting for children and other *learners*. My own memory was never very extraordinary, nor was I ever a regular attendant on the Episcopal service; yet I can even now, after hearing the first word, repeat almost every sentence. I am sure, then, that persons who have been in this habit for years must be able to repeat every word without a book.

"There is one disadvantage attending a form of prayer. It becomes a mechanical operation



of the mind; and while the lips enunciate the words with due precision and reverence, the mind is apt to wander and to dwell on other things; as it is with a skillful musician, who can play the most difficult piece of music, and at the same time think and sometimes converse rationally on other topics.

“And what are the benefits which it is supposed may be derived from a liturgical form of worship? Promotion of spiritual vitality will certainly not be claimed. If accessions of numbers be the thing, we would do better without accessions gained only by such means; but if we compare those sects that have cast aside the liturgical form and returned to the example of Christ and his apostles, with those who adhere to a form, we will see that in point of numbers, wherever equality of rights is allowed by law, the advantage is greatly on the side of the former.

“A form is recommended because it was practiced for many centuries in the church. It was practiced in the days of the power, and corruption, and wickedness, and intolerance of *the* church. But if there is truth in the best history of the church of *Christ*, it was not so in the *beginning*—in those days when the Messiah,

and after him his apostles, held their churches in hired rooms, in private houses, in the fields, and barns, and caves, nor once coveted the gorgeous temple service of Jews or Gentiles."

## THOUGHTS ON THE SUPPOSED TRINITY OR TRI-UNITY OF GOD.

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It is acknowledged, and it is fully agreed by all denominations of Christians, that this doctrine is not clearly, expressly taught, or laid down, or even once named in the Holy Scriptures. I am aware, however, that the advocates of this doctrine attempt to support it by implication or by presumptive evidence. But it is an established rule and law of evidence, that no implied, presumptive, or merely probable evidence can be admitted to control, contradict, or set aside clear, positive, infallible testimony. And we have the full, positive, infallible testimony of God and of Christ to disprove this dogma. God, in his holy Word, has solemnly proclaimed of himself, "I alone am God, and there is none else; there is none besides me; there is none with me; I am the Almighty God; there is no God like me!" And his Son, our blessed Saviour, the faithful and true witness, solemnly taught the same import-

ant truth. In his ardent prayer to God, his Father, he expressly said: "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou *hast* sent." And we might add, if necessary, the express testimony of the inspired Apostle Paul, who affirmed: "That to us (Christians) there is but one God, the *Father*, and one Lord Jesus Christ," who, he repeatedly declared, was the Son of God, and not the supreme God. We may, therefore, safely affirm that there is no satisfactory evidence at all in the Bible to support this human invented hypothesis. But as there may be some who do not make the Bible the sole rule of faith and practice, it will be well seriously to consider if this doctrine can be supported by the light or dictates of nature, reason and common sense. Upon this point we have full negative proof; for it must be acknowledged that in all the works and providence of God, we cannot find one creature, or being, or thing, that possesses trinity or tri-unity of nature or character; but every being and thing in its mode of existence is like its Creator—unity.

I make no great objection to trinitarianism, or the orthodox doctrines of the church that were always held before the fourth or fifth cen-

turies. Before that time, all the fathers of the church, all professed Christians, following Jesus Christ and his apostles in this, taught clearly that God the Father was the only true, supreme, Almighty God, and that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, or as they expressed it, and as it is in the Nicene creed, God the Son, or God of God, very God of very God," which is in substance the same, or means the same. According to them the Spirit was the Spirit of God Almighty. This was, then, true orthodoxy—was evangelical—and it wanted only the name to make it, in substance, true Unitarianism. This doctrine of the trinity, as now held by some, should be analyzed to be fully understood. Its advocates say, that (entirely contrary to what God has solemnly proclaimed of himself, that he "alone is God, and there is none else") it means that God is *three*, or *three persons* (it must be Gods) in one God; that God the Father is the first person, or God; that God the Son is the second person, or God; and that God the Holy Spirit is the third person, or God; that each person or God is equal with the other, and supreme and almighty. This must mean, if it can mean anything, that there are three equal Gods in one God; for the word per-



son is never once used in the Bible, or in any other book, but to signify an intelligent being. God himself is said to be a person. We read that Christ is the "express image of his (God's) person," of God himself, and the word person here cannot be supposed to refer to any other intelligent being but God himself.

I cannot, therefore, upon full investigation, consider this hypothesis, when fully analyzed, as anything but a palpable contradiction or a natural impossibility; for that *three* can be *one*, or *one* can be *three*, or that the Father, and his Son, and his Holy Spirit can all be one and the same person, or God, or that any father can be his own son, or that any son can be his own father, or that the spirit of any person can be another or third person, different from him to whom it belongs—such suppositions are all palpable contradictions and natural impossibilities.

Still, I do not take this view of the subject for the purpose of condemning any denomination of Christians. I have full charity and good-will towards the advocates of this doctrine, and can fellowship and worship with them, because I consider them sincere, and because I do not believe it (if true) a funda-

mental or essential doctrine ; but, at most, only a non-essential dogma, the belief or rejection of which will have no effect upon the salvation of the soul or the approbation of God.

But it may be asked, What are fundamental and essential doctrines, and what are not so ? I consider that all which God has expressly, plainly commanded or revealed, and all that Christ has so taught, is *fundamental and essential* ; and whatever God has not in any way expressly commanded or revealed, and what Christ has not so taught, cannot be fundamental or essential ; for I cannot believe that our all-wise, benevolent Father has omitted to command and expressly reveal to us everything that he requires of us, and what is necessary for us to believe or to do ; or that our blessed Saviour, who came into the world expressly to teach and to save men, and to declare the truth—I say I cannot believe that he omitted to fulfil, in every respect, his gracious, high office of love to men ; or that he neglected to teach anything that is essential to their salvation. And I fully believe that all the disagreements, controversies and disputes among different denominations of Christians, are upon

doctrines and points that are not fundamental nor essential. I can, therefore, see no good reasons why all Christians of all denominations should not be united, and *fellowship*, and commune, and worship together in love and harmony. Have they not all one common God and Father? Do they not all acknowledge, and receive into their hearts with faith and love, the same blessed Saviour of all? And do they not all believe that there is, and ever will be, in heaven, but *one* great, glorious and harmonious church of Christ and of God? And why will they not try to begin and practice heaven here, so that they may the better enjoy it hereafter to perfection, under the immediate care and blessing of their glorified Lord and Master, Jesus Christ?

## THOUGHTS ON EVANGELICALISM.

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What is evangelicalism? It is the faith once delivered to the saints—it is the whole Gospel of Christ, as recorded by the four Evangelists; it embraces all the commands and directions of God, all the teachings, life, sufferings and death of Christ, and all the duties and requirements of men. All Christians of this character, whatever may be their name, denomination, or creeds, are evangelical and orthodox; and there can be no reason for any denomination or denominations of Christians to claim to be or to be called exclusively evangelical. All Christians, both trinitarians and unitarians, who are of this character, are evangelical and orthodox; and it is uncharitable, it is wicked for one denomination, unjustly, to accuse another of not being evangelical.

The trinitarians will not allow that the unitarians are evangelical or orthodox. But of the two sects, it appears to me that the unitarians are the most evangelical and the most truly

orthodox; because they believe and hold to nothing but what is recorded in the Evangelists, and what was always orthodox before the fourth century; whereas the trinitarians hold to some things, some dogmas, that cannot be found in either of the Evangelists, or in any writings before the third or fourth century.

And I think that the unitarians should always have been, and should now be considered evangelical and orthodox; and their churches should be called evangelical, unitarian churches, mainly of the orthodox faith. But they must claim nothing exclusively: whatever they claim to be, or to be called, they must allow all other denominations and Christians to be, and to be called. For all Christians of all denominations are Christ's begotten sons and daughters, and should all be of one mind and one heart, as they all profess to believe in the one Gospel of Christ.

Christ prayed to his Father that all his disciples might be as one, united in love and harmony. O, may such a happy, glorious day soon arrive !



LECTURE ON HUMAN NATURE,  
AND THE  
SUPPOSED NATIVE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF IT.

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What is human nature, or the nature of man? It is the essence of all that man is. It embraces all his powers, capacities, and attributes. It is a oneness, though it is complex. It is partly animal and fleshly, and partly spiritual, moral, and religious. The parents are the instruments to produce the animal and fleshly part; but the spiritual part, I conceive, is the entire gift or bestowment of God, the holy inspiration of the Almighty. I cannot believe that the parents are the effectual instruments to produce the spiritual part of the nature. What! can mortal men produce immortal souls? can they create a real, spiritual image and likeness of God, such as he gave to our first parents? No; I think not. It is God's sole prerogative.

But when, at what time, he gives to or bestows upon our race this spiritual part of nature, this divine soul, we cannot tell. Could it be in the womb before birth, or immediately after, or during infancy, or before they could have any knowledge of good and evil? I should think it could not be; because they would be incapable of receiving such a divine gift, or of knowing its infinite value: so it could be of no use to them; and God never bestows anything when it cannot be beneficial to the receiver.

From this view, we must conclude that there can be no such thing as native depravity, either total, or in any degree; for depravity, or wickedness, must apply only to the spirit or soul of man, and not to the animal or fleshly part of his nature. We do not say of any one, that his hand, or his foot, or his whole body, is depraved; but we may say that his whole heart and soul are depraved and very wicked, while his whole body is only deformed or imperfect.

And we must further conclude, that no person can be at all depraved while in infancy, or before he is capable of knowing good and evil. An idiot cannot be depraved, any more than a child in the womb, or when first born; because he is incapable of knowing good and evil, or

virtue and vice. But we need not enlarge upon this point of native depravity, which is not now much controverted, but will come to something more important, but much to be lamented.

We know that there is great depravity, wickedness and corruption in the world. And whence comes it—be it total or less? Is it from God, or by his decree, or by the inventions of men? Solomon, who was wiser than all men, gives us the truth of the matter. After declaring that God hath made men upright—innocent, he says; that “they, (after becoming capable of knowing good and evil, virtue and vice,) have sought out many inventions,” wicked, corrupt, unholy inventions—such as disobedience to God’s laws and commands, neglect of all duty, irreverence towards God, unkindness to men, violation of their rights, and iniquity and injustice of every name or nature: these are the foolish and wicked inventions and devices of men, which cause depravity in them, and lead them to pervert and to violate their originally divine, upright natures, and to stifle all holy influence. It is not an originally depraved nature that impels men to sin; but it is something contrary to that nature which God

has given them. It is their own evil propensities, lusts, and ambition, that entice and plunge them into it. Depravity consists not in what God has bestowed on men, but in what men have done for themselves.

But while we conclude that all men are more or less depraved and sinful, for "there is no man that liveth and sinneth not," yet we must protest against the doctrine, that *all* men, even the best of men, are *totally* depraved and wicked, and wholly by nature inclined to evil, and utterly incapable of doing any good; or that infants, before they have the knowledge of good and evil, of virtue and vice, are at all depraved or sinful. The Word of God and our reason and experience reject such a doctrine. We believe that there have been many men who were not, and we hope that there are now an innumerable number that are not *totally*, if at all, depraved. We cannot believe that Abel, whose offering God accepted; or that Noah, who, in obedience to the direction of God, built the ark; or that Abraham, who, in obedience to God's command, was ready and willing to sacrifice his son Isaac; or Isaac and Jacob, the faithful servants of God; or Joseph, who was a faithful and true worshiper of his

God, a dutiful son to his own father, a kind and forgiving brother to his own wicked brothers, and who was a greatly beneficial agent for his country and people; or that Moses, who delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage; or David, the king, who was said to be a man "after God's own heart;" or all the true prophets of the Lord, or the apostles of Jesus Christ—I say, we cannot believe that these, and a vast many more that might be named, were all, or any of them, *totally* depraved, if at all so. And if we come to modern times, and in christianized states, and in our own country, we believe that there have been, and we trust and hope that there now are, many, a vast number, an innumerable number of persons that were not and that are not *totally*, if at all, depraved. Though it may seem that there were and are some instances of depravity and sinfulness in most of the best of men; but that does not prove that *all* men, or any men, are *totally* depraved and wicked, and wholly inclined to evil, and utterly incapable of ever doing any good; or that infants or children, before they can have any knowledge of good and evil, of virtue and vice, can be at all depraved; or that they can never become able to do any good, or to love God and men.



I would not argue that there is no depravity or sinfulness in the hearts of men, or most men. I would consider men as they are—imperfect, sinful creatures, capable of good and evil. My position is, that men are neither *totally* depraved and sinful, nor *totally* good and sinless; and that God made them free agents, capable of doing good or of doing evil, but that infants or children, before they can obtain knowledge of good and evil, and idiots, are incapable of doing either.

The commonly received dogma of native, total depravity of human nature is a libel upon mankind, and a false, wicked accusation of the true, holy God; for it makes man like the devil, or worse, and God the creator and establisher of human depravity and wickedness. But all nature, reason and common sense, and the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, the faithful and true Witness, teach that this dogma cannot be true; for if it were, and if, as the dogma teaches, all men are by nature *totally* depraved, wholly inclined to evil, and utterly incapable of doing any good, then nothing would be found in the world but gross wickedness—nothing but contention, quarrels, fighting, murders: parents would kill their

children, and children would murder their parents, and all kind of iniquity would be dominant. But on the contrary, we know that among men, though sinful, yet much good has been and is done ; much friendship displayed, and much love to God and men has and does appear in the world—(though infinitely less than what is due to the great Benefactor of mankind)—all which could not have been the case, if all men, from infancy, had been totally depraved, *wholly* inclined to evil, and utterly incapable of doing any good.

Jesus Christ, a perfect teacher sent from God, the faithful and true Witness, has fully disproved this dogma. He asked the Jews, “Why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right and acceptable to God?” Clearly implying that they were capable of judging and doing what was right and agreeable to the will of God. And to the morally good scribe he said, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven”—you are on the way, and God may admit you in when you come to the gate, which is open to all my true disciples.

And his conversation and treatment of little children clearly show that he considered them not depraved, but innocent and sinless ; for he

said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not"—I am delighted to see them, for "of such is the kingdom of heaven ;" therefore they could not be depraved ; for no depraved, unholy thing can enter there, or be taken into the arms of the blessed Jesus.

And many of Christ's declarations clearly prove that men are not by nature *totally* depraved and *wholly* inclined to evil ; that they are capable of being and doing good—of pleasing God and loving one another.

Now, to conclude, let us consider men as they are—neither *totally* depraved nor *totally* righteous ; free agents, capable of doing good and of doing evil. And let us constantly pray to God to enable us, with the aid of his Holy Spirit, to make them better, and more acceptable to Him who is "the Giver of every good gift."

## A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD DEMANDS THANK-  
FULNESS IN MEN.

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‘O, ta te and see that the Lord is good.’—Psalm xxxiv. 8.

Of all the perfect, great, benevolent, glorious attributes of God, none is more soul-reviving, more heart-melting, more adorable, than his unbounded goodness. And a right, true, perfect, cordial knowledge of the great goodness of God, is the most precious knowledge that can be acquired by men, by intelligent, accountable creatures—creatures who are made capable of enjoying happiness, and of knowing what is right and good, and what will be acceptable to their Creator. And this knowledge is easily obtained. It requires not even primary schools, nor academies, nor colleges, nor learned masters or doctors, nor creeds or catechisms, to teach it. All nature is its teacher—all the works of God loudly

proclaim it—all his providence fully reveals it, and his holy Word makes it sure and steadfast. The pious David was constantly, devoutly impressed with a deep sense of God's goodness. He often ardently, devoutly exclaimed : " O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men !" " O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good !" " O, taste and see that the Lord is good !"—and many such devout exclamations may be found in his Psalms.

But this true knowledge of the goodness of God is not a mere speculative knowledge—it is not a knowledge that is acquired by mathematical demonstration—it is not a knowledge that is obtained only in the schools of science and philosophy, or in theological institutions, or by geometrical or algebraical processes ; but it is a knowledge that originates in the pious heart, is taught by the Spirit of Christ, perfected by love and devotion to God, obedience to his commands, and by holiness of life.

The goodness of God is unbounded—it extends to all his creatures, but more especially to his intelligent creatures—to the high and



the low, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the prosperous and the destitute, the well and the sick, the joyful and the sorrowful, the happy and the afflicted—to all ranks, orders and conditions of men. It is not exclusive, it is not temporary—it is boundless as the universe, eternal as Jehovah. We cannot enumerate a thousandth part of the acts and manifestations of God's goodness. They are more than the sands upon the sea-shore, or the drops of the ocean—they are infinitely innumerable ; yet, with gratitude, devotion and adoration, we may well and delightfully meditate and dwell upon many of the most precious and glorious manifestations of the goodness of God.

The goodness of God is manifested not only in his greatest and most wonderful works of creation and providence, but also in the smallest affairs of the universe—all nature is full of it ! His goodness, as well as his power and wisdom, most wonderfully appears in his creating almost innumerable suns of immense magnitude and power, and placing them stationary, in infinite space, with no foundation to rest on but his almighty power, in the centre of their systems, there to regulate and control

the planetary worlds by which they are surrounded, and which regularly and safely revolve round their suns in their established orbits, agreeably to his fixed laws of nature, without danger of destruction by rushing together, or into their suns, or of flying off from their courses into an infinite space of chaos and darkness! and all which planetary worlds, we trust, the goodness of God has peopled with innumerable intelligent, happy beings—all, like us, “tasting and seeing that the Lord is good.” But we need not go to worlds unknown to discover the goodness of God. We will come to our planetary system, to our world, of which we know and see most. Here are infinitely more manifestations of the goodness of God, than finite men can enumerate or comprehend. We must acknowledge the infinite goodness and wisdom of the Creator, in fixing and regulating the earth so that it does not rush into the sun, or upon the other planets, or fly off from its orbit into infinite space. And we must acknowledge the great goodness and power of God, in his creating and fixing in the centre of our system a mighty, glorious, powerful sun, to regulate and govern the planets, to enlighten and warm them, and to

cause, sustain and produce life and vegetation—and in his forming and fitting the earth for human habitation and use, when it “was without form and void”—when “darkness was upon the face of the deep,” and “God said, Let there be light! and there was light;” and when the waters and the land were in a state of chaos and confusion, “and God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so;” and when God placed the greater and the lesser lights in the firmament of heaven; and when he created all the irrational animals, and all inanimate things which were intended for the use of man. What a wonderful manifestation of the great goodness of God designed for men!

But, more especially, do we taste and see the precious goodness of God in our own creation—in the formation of our bodies, with numerous, various, mysterious properties and capacities—in our growth and strength—in our ability for action, motion, seeing, hearing, speaking, tasting, feeling—in animal enjoyment and pleasure—in a natural desire to partake of those things which will sustain and prolong our lives, which things the goodness of our

heavenly Father has provided for us; for he made this world, and all the irrational creatures and inanimate things in it, at least, principally for our use and benefit; thereby amply providing everything necessary for our support and comfort.

But vastly more do we perceive and feel the great goodness of our Creator, in his constituting us rational, intelligent creatures—in giving us capacities for intellectual joy and happiness—in making us capable of loving, worshipping and serving him; of being, in some measure, like him, and of holding spiritual communion with the Father of our spirits; also, of loving and doing good to our fellow-men, and of causing and enjoying much mutual happiness—in his creating men male and female, designed for pure, mutual, reciprocal, connubial love, joy, and delight—in giving them interesting, lovely children, to be the delight of their eyes, the joy of their hearts, and the comfort of their lives—and in establishing paternal attachment, filial affection, and fraternal love, and friendship—all which are the effects of the goodness of God.

I believe that such was the goodness and benevolence of the Creator, that when he made

man, he designed that he and all his posterity should be happy; or, at least, that they should be capable of being so if they would rightly use and improve the means and capacities he had given them for the purpose. I have such an exalted view of the benevolent character of the all-wise, all-merciful Father of the universe, that I cannot possibly believe that he has decreed or designed that any of the posterity of Adam should be miserable, and lie under the wrath and curse of God for ever, on account of Adam's transgression. I believe that such is not only the goodness but also the justice of God, that he will never punish one man for the sin of another.

But we are told that, in process of time, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually—that the earth was corrupt before God and full of violence;" so that the Lord said, "I will destroy man from off the face of the earth, and everything that is in the earth shall die." Yet we see the great goodness of God in excepting and saving Noah and his family from the general destruction, and thereby preserving the human race from total extinction; and in



his afterwards blessing Noah and his sons, and bidding them to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth.

And, afterwards, we see the goodness of God in raising up Abraham, the faithful, to be the father of his chosen people, from whom he promised that "one should arise in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed." And we see the good providence of God, (for "God meant it for good,") when Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt; as, in consequence thereof, the children of Israel, God's chosen people, were saved from destruction by famine, and made to increase and prosper mightily. And when the children of Israel were afterwards cruelly oppressed by Pharaoh, we learn the special goodness of God, in raising up Moses to be their great deliverer from Egyptian bondage and oppression; miraculously to conduct them through the Red Sea and the wilderness; and in the most wonderful manner to be called up to the top of Mount Sinai, in the midst of the thick cloud, the thunder, and the lightning, and there to talk with God, and to receive from him the law and the commandments.

And the wonderful goodness of God appears

in his giving us, through Moses and the Prophets, the Old Testament, his holy Word and Revelation, which largely proclaims his goodness and all his glorious attributes, and points out our duty towards him and towards our fellow-men.

And we see the goodness of God, especially, to the children of Israel, in raising up holy David to sit on the throne of Israel, and to be a type and the ancestor of Christ, the Saviour.

But above all things should we taste, see, and feel the inestimable goodness of God, in his benevolent provision for our everlasting happiness—for his great and glorious plan of redemption and salvation—for his infinite love to men, displayed in his sending his beloved Son from the throne of his glory, from the bosom of his love, from all the joys and glories of heaven, into this sinful world—here to unfold and clearly reveal the perfect, glorious, merciful, forgiving character of his Father—here to teach, instruct, and persuade sinners to repent, reform, and become reconciled to their kind Father in heaven—and here to be cruelly treated, mocked, crowned with thorns, and to die on the cross, that sinners might live for ever! Must not such amazing, infinite

goodness of our heavenly Father, displayed for the salvation of the world, soften, melt to love and gratitude, the cold, ungrateful hearts of all the intelligent creatures of God upon earth, and persuade them to call upon their whole souls, and all that is within them, "to taste and see that the Lord is good?"

But, though this was the greatest, the most wonderful manifestation of the goodness of God to men, yet it was not the last—it did not exhaust the infinite fountain of his goodness and love; for since there have issued from it perpetual, delightful streams of goodness and mercy. God's goodness, like himself, is everlasting—it can have no end—neither time nor eternity can bring it to a close. Since the resurrection of Christ, as well as before, we know that the constant goodness, care and superintendence of God have attended all his creatures and all his works; and his mercy still continues, and will endure for ever. Through the goodness of God, and his special, wise, protecting providence, both the Old and New Testaments have been preserved and handed down to us, notwithstanding all the changes, destructions, iniquity, and infidelity that have prevailed in the world. It seems to be truly

miraculous, that while no writings so ancient as the Old Testament, and few as old as the New Testament, are to be found, yet we have both the Old and New Testaments, as we trust, mostly in their original purity and divinity. This circumstance fully shows the great goodness and superintendency of the great Ruler of the universe, and proves beyond a doubt that the Bible is the Word of God—that it was given by his inspiration, and by his goodness and overruling providence has been preserved and published in nearly all languages, and circulated over almost the whole world; and we trust it will continue to circulate, and be to all people a guide, and a light which can never be extinguished, which earth and hell cannot destroy.

Again: we see a precious manifestation of the goodness of our heavenly Father, in the spread and acceptance of the Gospel of Christ throughout a great part of the world, even against the most powerful opposition. Nothing but the power and goodness of God could have given it such a wonderful progress, and caused it to operate most powerfully upon the hearts and lives of men, and to still the tumults and contentions of nations. And we

may fondly hope that the continued goodness of God will ere long cause this Gospel to make all men benevolent, peaceful, and "wise unto salvation;" that, being preached to all nations, people and languages, it will cause war, contention and all iniquity everywhere to cease; and universal love, harmony and peace to prevail and continue throughout the whole world. O, roll on, glorious event!

Again: we must not omit to notice the special goodness of God, in permitting, aiding and protecting our forefathers in leaving their native land and coming to and settling in this country, that they might enjoy civil and religious liberty, at a time when they were unjustly deprived, at home, of the liberty of worshiping their God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Yes, it was the goodness of God and his kind providence that preserved, guided and directed our forefathers through the dangers, storms and tempests of the ocean, and, after a long voyage, landed them, rejoicing, in this then savage wilderness. And then, it was the goodness of God that protected and sustained them through innumerable dangers, difficulties and sufferings—defended them against savage wild beasts



and more savage men, and at length made them strong, and powerful, and prosperous.

And when the colonies were unjustly oppressed, it was the goodness of God and the mighty arm of the Lord that enabled our fathers to contend successfully and victoriously for their rights and liberties against the mother country—that gave them a mighty deliverer, a *Moses*, in a Washington, to deliver the American Israel from British oppression—that enabled them “to come off conquerors, and more than conquerors,” through the goodness of God—and to establish their independence as a nation, to adopt the best form of government in the world, to establish civil and religious liberty, to enact good and wholesome laws, and to cause prosperity and happiness to flow in gentle, powerful streams over the whole land ; all which were effected through the goodness and overruling power of God ; for without his aid and blessing, men, his dependent creatures, can have no success—can do nothing effectually good or salutary.

But we should not take a retrospective view only, of the goodness of our God ; but we should taste, and see, and feel, with inex-

pressible gratitude, his present goodness and mercy; and we may well rejoice with joy unspeakable in the anticipation and hope of the continuance of his goodness, and for the enjoyment of that happiness hereafter which he has promised to all "those who love him and keep his commandments."

The present goodness of God towards us as a nation and people, as individuals, as citizens, and as Christians, wonderfully appears in all that we see and know. As a nation, through the goodness of God and his kind providence, we are blessed with the best form of government under heaven—we are respected by and at peace with all the nations of the earth.

As a people at large, we should acknowledge the goodness of God in providing for us this good land, "a land flowing with milk and honey," abounding with all the necessities and comforts of life, producing enough and to spare—yea, more than enough to supply the wants of all its inhabitants and visitors, so that we are able to send immense quantities to the relief of the destitute and suffering of other countries. No people on earth have the means of producing such a superabundance of the necessities and comforts of life as the

United States have. And do we not know, are we not duly sensible, that all these means and blessings are the bestowment of the goodness and kind providence of God, "the giver of every good gift?" Will any one deny that it is *he* that makes our lands fertile? that *he* sends his rain and sunshine to moisten and warm the earth, and cause the corn and all other vegetables to grow up to maturity? that *he* is the Creator of the beasts of the field, and all animals and things intended for the use of man? Will any one doubt that it is the goodness of God which gives our people health and strength, and all the means and blessings necessary for the cultivation of the soil, and for the production of our most abundant crops? that "he makes the grass the mountains crown, and corn in valleys grow?" O that *our* people would praise the Lord for his goodness, his blessings, and his wonderful works to *them*!

But the fruits and productions of the earth are but a small part of the blessings and enjoyments which the goodness of God has bestowed upon us. It has given us intellectual fruits and provisions—it has given us satisfying food for the soul—it has enriched the mind

with necessary science and useful knowledge—it has bestowed upon us civil and religious liberty—it has given us the means and power of enjoying private, domestic, social and public happiness and comfort—it has made us capable not only of possessing happiness ourselves, but of communicating it, and bestowing it upon our brethren and fellow-men—made us capable of *being* good and *doing* good—it has given us his holy Word and the Gospel of his Son. O, taste and see that the Lord is good !”

\* We, the people of the United States, see the great goodness of God in the religious privileges and blessings we enjoy. To almost all, even to the poor, is the Gospel preached. No other nation has so great religious privileges. Nowhere else is there so great religious liberty, (though it is sometimes abused by mistaken zealots.) Nowhere else is there so great toleration among professed Christians—though it is not so perfect as it should be, according to the doctrines of Christ. And nowhere is there less persecution of Christians—though some fragments of it yet remain, but not of the worst and most cruel kind ; for men are not now, here, tortured or burnt at the stake for

their religious faith—nor, often, anathematized or excommunicated as heretics and unbelievers, because they cannot conscientiously believe agreeably to the dictates of some bigoted, uninspired men, or body of men; nor are they now compelled, by force of law, to worship their God in a manner contrary to his Word and the dictates of their own reason and consciences. And we have reason to rejoice in the goodness of God and the divine influence of his Holy Spirit, that truly liberal, charitable, Christian views and doctrines are evidently progressing and increasing among almost all denominations of Christians. And we fondly hope that the goodness of God will ere long lead all men to true repentance and reformation, and hasten the time when all denominations of Christians will, in love and harmony, be one in Christ, as he is one with the Father; and when all shall supremely worship the Father alone, and with faith and love receive into their hearts his beloved Son as their only Lord and Saviour.

But although we must be sensible that God's goodness and mercy have followed us all our days, yet we have a better and more glorious joy and hope. From the benevolent,



merciful and forgiving character of our Almighty Father, and from his promises to them that love him and keep his commandments, we have an ardent, encouraging hope, that when we have done with all the joys, comforts and blessings he has given us in this world, his goodness and mercy will admit us into his glorious kingdom above—there to unite with angels and glorified spirits in rapturous songs, anthems, and hallelujahs of praise and thanksgiving “to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever !”

## PURE RELIGION.

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“Pure religion in man, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”—James, i. 27.

The passage of Scripture I have just read to you naturally leads us to a serious consideration of what is pure religion and undefiled before God the Father; and as we may often well ascertain what any thing is by determining what it is not, I will very briefly attempt to represent and show—1, What is not pure religion; and then affirmatively, 2, What is pure religion, and in what it does consist.

1. Pure religion is not a mere form of godliness without the substance and power thereof. It consists not in cold, formal lip-service, when the heart is insensible, undevout, and far from God. It consists not in long, heartless prayers—in often hypocritically crying, Lord! Lord! while we do not the will of our Father in heaven. It consists not in an outward profes-

sion of religion, without a practical performance of its duties towards God and men. It does not consist in the form or faith of creeds, catechisms, confessions of faith, ecclesiastical decrees, or any dogmas of human invention, without the reception and love of the Gospel of Christ in the heart. It consists not in mere external rites and ceremonies, while the soul is unmoved by the ineffable love of God to men. It does not consist in formal, long, cold, undevout prayers to God, ("for pretense or to be seen of men,") without pure devotion of heart. It consists not, principally, in often fasting, with a sad countenance and disfigured face, (so as "to appear to men to fast,") while the heart is not humbled before God, and the life is not made better. It consists not in mere matters of theory, or speculative opinions; or in great excitement of the animal feelings, so as to produce apparent raptures of zeal for God; or in loud professions of love and good will to men, while the heart is unmoved by their sufferings and the hands are closed against their wants. It consists not in exciting an unreasonable, awful fear of the wrath and vengeance of Almighty God, while his unbounded goodness, love and mercy are seldom named or thought

of. Pure religion never gives up reason and common sense to imagination and enthusiasm, nor permits the creeds or traditions of men to control the Word of God. It consists not in constant gloomy contemplations; in mysterious, unintelligible conversations; in mere noise; in bodily sighing, weeping, and groaning about our sins, while our hearts and lives are not made better thereby. It does not consist in boasting of our own good works, or in thanking God "that we are not as other men;" or in trusting in ourselves that we are righteous, and condemning others; or in having assurance of our own infallibility, and denouncing, as heretics and unbelievers, all of a different faith or creed. It cannot live in sectarian exclusiveness—it cannot exist without charity, without love and communion with one another. Then,

2. What is pure religion, and in what does it and must it consist?

The Apostle James has told us, (at least, in part,) that "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world."

But what does the apostle mean, by visiting

the fatherless and widows in their afflictions? To visit, or visiting, has different significations. Sometimes it means to afflict, to give pain, to cause grief or sorrow, or some personal evil. But it cannot be that James had reference to such a kind of visit. What! could the apostle recommend an afflictive visit to the afflicted—a sorrowful visit to the sorrowful—an unprofitable visit to the needy? No. There could be no pure religion in such a visit—it would be an irreligious, an unchristian, an unkind visit. But did the apostle mean that we should only make a formal, cold, heartless visit—just call and leave our card; or, if we should find them suffering with hunger and cold, and destitute of the comforts of life and the means of grace, that we should only say to them, “Be ye filled, be ye warmed,” be all your wants supplied—and then wish them well, and leave them, with our hearts unmoved at their sufferings and our hands unopened to their wants? Such a visit would be nothing like pure religion, nothing like a Christian visit; and the apostle could not have had reference to such a kind of visit. What kind of visit, then, did James mean to recommend? It was a friendly visit, a benevolent visit, a useful visit, a sympathetic visit,



a Samaritan visit, a Christian visit, a God-like visit—such visits as Christ constantly made while on earth.

We should visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and all others in want, with warm hearts and open hands. We should not only wish them well, but do them good—bind up their wounded spirits, pouring in the oil and wine of divine consolation, bestowing upon them our own money and comforts, if necessary—take care of them, and come again, and do for them what further they may need. *Such* is the visiting which is “pure religion and undefiled before God the Father.”

But this is not all we have to do to be purely religious; for we are to “keep ourselves unspotted from the world;” that is, we must be free from all the prevailing sins, iniquities, and impurities of the world—we must practice justice, benevolence, goodness, and all the moral virtues, and perform all the moral duties of life. These constitute at least a part of pure religion.

But here I must observe, that some very pious, some perhaps overmuch righteous divines maintain, that moral virtues and moral duties are not religion. But James did not

say so—none of the apostles ever said so—Christ Jesus, while on earth, never so taught. No preacher, no minister of any sect or denomination ever taught or preached so much pure morality as Jesus Christ did. His first, his pure, his beautiful, divine sermon on the mountain is full of moral doctrines; and all his discourses strongly urge the observance of moral laws and the performance of moral duties. And will any one presume to accuse Jesus Christ, who spake as never man spake, who taught as one having authority, who was a perfect teacher sent from God—will any one dare to accuse *him* of not preaching religion? Then let no one denounce his humble imitators.

I agree, however, that mere external moral virtues and moral duties are not the whole of religion: they are but a part thereof—comparatively a small part; they are but the fruits of holiness—the branches of the great spiritual tree of eternal life—the streams that flow from the infinite, inexhaustible fountain of divine love and goodness. But piety towards God, supreme love to God, with faith in his Son, our Mediator and Saviour, a cordial reception of his doctrines, and love to our neighbors, these are the only foundation, the great, first, moving

principle of all religion and of all duty. Without these, the fruits aforesaid would perish, the branches would wither and die, the streams would be dried up, and all religion and holiness would be dead, all enjoyment and happiness would be annihilated, and all hopes of future joys would be for ever blasted.

It is a reverential, supreme love to God that makes a religious heart—that makes a Christian—that forms the soul for devotion and adoration—that leads to the performance of our duty towards our God and our fellow-men—that creates and sweetens all the joys of life and brightens all the hopes of future bliss. Without love to God there could be no holiness, no happiness on earth or in heaven. Without it the angels around the throne of God could not be happy, but would be most miserable; they would not *be angels*—they would be *devils*. Without love to God, his most precious gifts would be no blessings at all, but rather an aggravation, a torment; because we should not be capable of enjoying the rich favors granted.

It is love to God that gives the soul (if I may so speak) a taste, a relish, for spiritual food, and the power of digesting and making it useful—it is to the soul what food is to the

body. Without food the body would languish and die; so, without love to God in the heart, the soul would deaden, freeze, and expire in an eternal death. Without it no spiritual, good thing can exist. You might as well expect to raise a crop without the influence of the sun and rain, as to make a real pious Christian without implanting love to God in his heart. You might as easily cause your gardens to produce clusters of choice fruit from a snow-storm or a shower of hail-stones, as to make the soul of man truly pious by a multitude of cold, theological creeds and catechisms of human invention, without the holy, warm influence of love to God in the heart.

From what we have remarked, and from an examination of the whole of the Scriptures, we are led to conclude, that though James said that "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world, is pure religion before God the Father," yet he could not have meant that these are the whole of religion. But we may safely say, that, according to the Word of God, this pure religion, and the *whole* of it, is *this*: to have a holy reverence for God, to acknowledge him as our Creator, the Father of our spirits,

the Giver of all things we possess or enjoy, our Preserver, our only hope and reliance, our constant Benefactor and almighty Friend—to love him with all our hearts, souls, and minds—to love his Son and to receive him, in faith, as our Mediator and Saviour—to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to have love and good will towards all mankind—to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world—to avoid all prevailing sins and unrighteousness—to relieve the distresses and supply the wants of all, and to do good to all, as much as in our power—to practice all the moral virtues, and fulfill all moral duties, to cease to do evil and learn to do well—to repent, reform, and be reconciled to God, and to do works meet for repentance—to live holy and righteous lives, and in all things to imitate our blessed Lord, who went about doing good. Such is a summary of the *whole* of “pure religion, and undefiled before God the Father.”

But from this summary we might detail an almost infinite variety of virtues, obligations, and duties. But I need not describe them. Your own consciences, your own hearts will bring them into view, will make them the im-



portant subjects of your devout and useful contemplation and delight, sources of improvement to your own minds, hearts, and lives, and the surest means of increasing and sweetening all the joys of this life, and of brightening the hopes and fond expectations of a future and more glorious state of being.

True religion was designed to promote the happiness of this world, as well as to secure that of the next. Paul says, "It is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "This is a faithful saying," said he, "and worthy of all acceptance."

I have thought that if pure religion had always been represented and clearly displayed in its true light, in all its pure simplicity, in all its perfect love and goodness, in all its beauty, in all its loveliness, in all its divinity, in all its glory—it would have been, it must have been cordially, universally received and embraced by all intelligent beings upon earth. I have often thought that many false and counterfeit representations of it—many cold, revolting doctrines—many strange, inconsistent notions and dogmas respecting it, have prevented its general reception, and checked its

progress more than all its open, avowed enemies—much more than all the writings of infidels.

Pure religion is something designed to be felt in the heart, and acted and practiced in the life. Practical religion was the religion which Jesus Christ taught. *He* never taught anything that was impracticable. *He* never taught anything that was inconsistent or incredible. *He* never commanded men to do what God had not given them power to do. His requirements were reasonable. “His yoke was easy, and his burden was light.” *His* religion was to act, to practice—not to make formal professions, but to do the will of his Father, who sent him.

Now it may be asked, Where shall we find those who truly act and practice religion?—who are they? I will describe some of them.

Those fathers who, from a full conviction of the being and all the perfect attributes of God, of his wisdom displayed in all his works, his justice in all his ways, his righteousness in all his dealings, his goodness in all his providence, his holiness in all his laws and commands; and who, being suitably impressed with a just sense of their own dependence, their own ac-

countability, their own obligations and duties, direct their conduct in harmony with the eternal principles of rectitude and benevolence, exhibiting evidence of religious guidance in their various duties and occupations of life ; who, in the management of their household and all their affairs, exercise wisdom and justice, with kindness and love ; who do not sacrifice the good and comfort of their children by rigorous, arbitrary authority, nor spoil them by too fond indulgence, but, according to their best means, generously and freely provide for their temporal comfort and for their spiritual well-being ; who, by wise counsel, by just reproof, by seasonable correction, by due caution, by encouragements, and especially by their good examples, inspire them with true principles of right and justice, of honor, and everything that is virtuous and praiseworthy ; and train them up in the way in which they should go, to become useful, respectable, prosperous and happy. Such fathers, no matter what their creeds or confessions of faith may be, or to what sect or denomination of Christians they belong, they practice religion.

Again: those husbands who, feeling them-

selves under obligations to obey the laws of God and nature, are affectionate, kind, and faithful to the companions of their bosoms, loving them as themselves, always willing to gratify them in all their reasonable desires, ever placing all due confidence in them, encouraging them to those virtuous and generous deeds that are most lovely in the female sex, constantly striving to increase their mutual love and happiness, and to promote the good of their families and all mankind—such good husbands practice religion.

Again: those wives who, properly regarding God's benevolent design in the creation of woman, and the duty he enjoined, are truly help-meets, always faithful and affectionate, and duly respectful to their husbands, regarding their interest, honor, prosperity, and happiness, "looking well to the ways of their household, and not eating the bread of idleness;" whose words and deeds are always commendable and praiseworthy—who open their mouths with wisdom, and in their tongues is the law of kindness—"who stretch forth their hands to the poor, yea, who reach forth their hands to the needy"—who are ever so constant and faithful, that the hearts of their husbands do safely

trust in them—such wives will bring up their children in the way they should go, teach them habits of industry, and lead them in the paths of virtue and peace; and it is such wives who practice religion. And they should be praised.

Again: we must not omit to notice mothers. Mothers are the most important beings in the world. They can produce more good (or cause more evil) than all the rest of mankind. Their influence, from their situation, is almost unbounded, especially over their own children and household. And we will charitably believe that most of them are rightly disposed, and will be faithful in their station. And those mothers who, to the extent of their powers and influence, bring up their children and household in the way of peace and righteousness, enlightening their minds with useful knowledge, and warming their hearts with love to God and men, teaching and persuading them to *be* good and to *do* good to all, to be kind and charitable, and to strive to enlarge the sum of human happiness—such mothers practice religion; and “their children and their children’s children will rise up and call them blessed.”

Again: those children who love the Lord their God with all their hearts, honor their pa-



rents, obey all their reasonable commands, attend to their useful instructions, and follow their good examples—who live together in love and harmony, and endeavor to promote the happiness and prosperity of all—such good children practice religion; and we may trust that they will be “made pillars in the temple of their God, and go no more out.”

Again: those brothers and sisters who, being influenced by the divine law of love and the pure doctrines of Christ, exclude from the family circle all jealousies, discord, and contention, and live together in perfect quietness, and in constant interchange of mutual friendship, tenderness, and love, having no strife among themselves, but to see which can do the most good and cause the most happiness—such kind brothers and sisters, whatever may be their station in life or rank in society, *they* practice religion.

Again: to look a little higher. All civil officers, presidents, governors, judges, and legislators of our country, who seek the approbation of their God and their own consciences, and not the applause and support of a political party—who always act for the good and prosperity of the whole country, and not to promote

their own interest or personal ambition, or to please and gratify a party that supports and flatters them—who always promote to offices of trust, the best men, men of experience, integrity, talents, and known lovers of their God and their country, and never such as are untried, inexperienced, or unworthy, only because they may be sycophantic adherents of the appointing power; and who, being above political corruption and intrigue, uniformly act upon principle, and solely for the public good—such men, such honest statesmen, practice religion, and should be considered the faithful servants of their God and their country.

Once more. That religious society whose members all love the Lord their God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves—who are always in love and harmony with each other, and full of love and charity with all men—who gratefully receive their blessed Saviour in faith and love, obey his injunctions, promote the spreading of his Gospel in its purity, and in all things endeavor to follow his bright example—that society, whatever may be its creed or confession of faith upon paper, or to whatever sect or denomination it may belong, does indeed practice religion. And though

they may be denounced and despised by their uncharitable, unchristian brethren, and called heretics, yet they may have a confident hope and trust that their Lord and Judge will, at last, say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

## BRIEF LECTURE

ON THE

### SUPPOSED TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

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What must be considered the real natures in or of Christ, or of all other persons or beings? It must be acknowledged that all the powers, capacities, and everything that in any way belongs to any person or being, make and constitute his one whole nature—make him what he is. He cannot have two or more natures, for that would make him two or more persons or beings, twice himself, which cannot be according to the laws of nature. The powers and capacities of man, his power of motion, of thought, of speech, of hearing, of seeing, and all his powers, everything that pertains to him, make and constitute his one only established nature—he cannot have two natures, for that would make him two men in one man, which would not be a proper man, but a monster. And if we take a view of our blessed

Saviour, we shall find that all his power, his offices, and everything which his Father has given him, constitute his one, only, pure, perfect nature. He cannot have two distinct natures—twice everything that God his Father has given him; for that would make him two persons, two Christs, two mediators between God and men, and a double Saviour of the world, which would be wholly incredible, unscriptural, and irrational.

And if we could comprehend all the attributes, nature and mode of existence of the almighty God, we should find that his underived almighty power, wisdom, goodness, and all his great and glorious attributes, constitute his one only holy, perfect nature. He cannot have two such natures; for that would make him two almighty, supreme Gods, which is an absolute impossibility.

We must conclude, therefore, that no person or being in the universe can have two distinct, different natures. The one only nature of every person comprehends all that he is.

Moreover, in a moral and religious view, there is in this hypothesis a great evil and inconsistency; for it annihilates the mediation of Christ between God and men, because a media-



tor must be one between the parties, disinterested, and not one of either party. But if Christ, according to this hypothesis, is both God and man, then he is, as God, one of the parties, and as man the other; and cannot come in as a disinterested mediator between them.

If two nations have a quarrel, or are at war with each other, a mediator may be appointed to mediate between them, to bring about a reconciliation, to make them at peace, and to establish friendship. But one of those nations could not be a mediator between them, and it would be ridiculous to suppose that both might be such mediator.

So, if men are contending or fighting against God and violating his laws and commands, and God is angry with them, it would seem that a mediator might be appointed to bring about reconciliation, obedience, peace, and satisfaction. But Christ, being (according to this hypothesis) both God and man, could not be the mediator; because he is one of the parties and interested—yea, because he is both of the parties, and cannot be a go-between them, to bring about a reconciliation or to effect any good purpose.

Another fatal objection to this hypothesis, is

that it annihilates the precious atonement of Christ; for Christ's death is considered the chief of the atonement. But if Christ was God, the ever-living God, then he could not and did not die: the account of his death must be a mere fiction; and so no atonement was or could be made, if this hypothesis is true.

And if Christ died only as man, as some say, then there was no sufficient, divine atonement—nothing but a human sacrifice, which would not satisfy divine justice: so they must make God himself die to satisfy his own justice. Therefore we cannot believe in this hypothesis. I have thought it strange—yea, “passing strange,” that such an unscriptural, irrational, impossible-to-be-true doctrine, should ever have been invented and adopted by any rational professed Christians. But I would not unkindly condemn its advocates, but regard them with charity and Christian affection.

But if we consider Christ as the Bible represents him to be—the only beloved Son of God, and another and distinct person from his Father, having but one perfect nature—that he, for awhile, tabernacled in humanity—then he was a proper go-between God and man, and a sufficient mediator, and able, by God's appointment, to make atonement for sinners.

And O that all professed Christians might adopt and view this mediation and this atonement as of infinite importance; and that they would give all the praise and all the glory to God, with ineffable love to his Son, for their wonderful, gracious works to the sinful children of men, for their salvation and everlasting good and happiness in heaven hereafter!

## GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT

### IS GREAT GAIN.

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“Godliness with contentment is great gain.”—1 Tim. vi. 6

The Apostle says, that “Godliness *with* contentment is great gain.” Now, if I was to criticise upon this expression, I should say that godliness *without* contentment cannot exist. Piety, *without* resignation to the holy will and divine allotments of Providence, cannot live in the soul. Godliness and contentment, piety and resignation, are mutual dependents, inseparable companions, divine associates.

But my design at this time is to consider the great virtue and loveliness of contentment or resignation—its power and influence over the hearts and lives of men. Contentment is a virtue to be acquired in the school of Christ—to be learned by the teachings of re-

ligion, and the dictates of reason and common sense. But it is said to be a hard lesson for men to learn in this life, because the world is so full of evil, of troubles, of disappointments, of vexations, of crosses and losses, of envy, malice, hatred, of poverty, distress, hardships, dangers, trials, afflictions, and almost innumerable evils, which are temptations to lead the mind to discontent, to dissatisfaction, and to complaining against the holy providence of God. But none of these evils induced Paul to be discontented, although he endured many of them. He said, "In labors he was abundant, in stripes above measure, in prison frequent—of the Jews, five times received he forty stripes, save one; thrice was he beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day had been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Yet in all these trials and sufferings he learned contentment, and was always



ready to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content;" knowing that all things would work together for good, if he loved God and kept his commandments. And we have a brighter and more perfect example of contentment and resignation in our blessed Saviour, who was poor, who "had not where to lay his head," who was treated with more cruelty, abuse, reproach and indignity, than any other person that ever was on earth; yet he opened not his mouth—he complained not—he was contented and resigned to do and to suffer, according to the will of his Father in heaven. And do we need more perfect patterns, that we may learn contentment? and shall we not attempt to imitate such bright examples? But we will, in a more plain, simple and obvious manner, consider the reasonableness and the important duty of learning and practicing contentment and resignation.

We believe that our Creator, the Director of all the affairs of the universe, is a sovereign, a wise, a benevolent, merciful being; always desirous of the happiness of his creatures; not willing that any should perish or suffer, but that all should live and be happy;

therefore, both nature and religion teach that his creatures should always be contented and resigned, in whatever state or condition he may be pleased to place them ; whether it may seem to them for good or for evil (God only knowing what will be best for them, and resignation being their duty.)

Again : it will appear reasonable that we should be contented, in whatsoever state we are, if we consider that we are the creatures of God's will and pleasure, as well as of his power and goodness. He might have seen fit to have created us a lower order of beings, to have made us irrational animals, or even a part of the inanimate creation ; but it was his good will and pleasure to create us intelligent beings. And should we not learn to be gratefully, joyfully and perfectly contented, when we consider what exalted rank he has given us in the scale of being—what great and wonderful powers and capacities for private, domestic and social joys, and for temporal and everlasting happiness, he has bestowed upon us ?—though he may occasionally mix some sorrows with our joys, some grief with our happiness, some pains with our pleasures, or some disappointments with our hopes, all in-

tended, however, to work together for our good. And must we not rest contented and satisfied that all states and conditions of life (except such as are brought about by our own folly or wickedness) are determined and fixed by the will and pleasure of the Almighty; and that we have not power, against that will and pleasure, to alter them or make them better? Besides, had we the power to change them, are we sure that we could do better for ourselves than the all-wise, benevolent God *has* done for us, or will do for us in his own due time? And must not these considerations lead us to contentment and resignation? All men are liable to trials and afflictions of some kind, in some measure. Evil and good, calamities and blessings, sorrows and joys, are often mixed together, and attendant upon all. Some are rich, some are poor; some prosperous, some unfortunate; some blessed with friends and companions, some deprived of them; some have health of body and mind, some are weak and diseased; some in high stations of life, and some in low; to all which we are all liable; but will our discontent or murmuring alter any of them for the better, or do us any good? No. Contentment and resignation are the best remedies for evils, the sure balm for all afflictions.

Again: we may learn to be contented in the state and condition we are placed, if we look around and see how many there are in a like or worse condition than ourselves, who are contented and happy—and why may not we copy their good example, and be so likewise? If they are contented in their worse condition, shall not we be resigned in our better condition?

Again: we may learn contentment, by reflecting that many, apparently in a much better condition as to the necessities, comforts, and enjoyments of life than we are, yet are *not* happy and contented. Have the poor any right to calculate, that if they were only rich they should certainly be happy and contented? Are those who have most wealth, the best contented? I think not. Their wants, their troubles, and discontents, increase faster than their wealth. They gain no contentment, but they are continually anxious to gain more riches. They cannot be satisfied with what they now possess, however large the possession may be; but they rely entirely upon what they may yet acquire, to make them contented.

Again: we may learn contentment, even in a state of the most severe trials, troubles, afflictions, and disappointments, if we reflect

upon the many, innumerable mercies and blessings bestowed upon us, to move our hearts to gratitude and praise; and if we reflect how much worse our condition might be than it now is—how many would consider it a desirable and happy state—if we consider how many of the necessities and comforts of life are still continued to us. And if we have food and raiment, should we not therewith be content, though we are deprived of the luxuries of life?

But here let me incidentally say, that though contentment is at all times a duty, yet it is also a duty to improve all the talents God has given us; to use all the means granted us for improving and bettering our state and condition in life, and to pray constantly for divine aid and direction. And although riches are not to be considered of the highest value, yet it is our duty to use all lawful, honest, laudable means to acquire wealth, that we may use it to the praise of God, the Giver, to our own comfort and convenience, and the benefit of our fellow-creatures; thereby with gratitude receiving good, and doing good. But to return:—

Again: we may learn to be content, in whatsoever state we are, if we reflect that our earth-



ly state is short, and that the troubles, anxieties, pains, and disappointments we here endure may be for our good—may improve our minds, draw our hearts to God, induce us to put our chief trust in him, to look to him at all times for aid and direction, and to brighten our hopes of future bliss. In a little time we shall be removed from this uncertain, transitory, mortal state; and if we are found faithful to our God and our own souls, we may expect to be admitted into an eternal state of perfect contentment, life and joy.

Again: we shall be contented, if we consider that God is always present, nigh, ready, and willing to help us—if we trust in him, at all times, in all situations and circumstances. Our earthly friends may forget, neglect, forsake, or betray us; but the Lord is faithful, and will not forsake them that fear him, but will supply all their wants—"will forgive all their iniquities, heal all their diseases—will redeem their lives from destruction, crown them with loving kindness and tender mercies—will satisfy their mouths with good things, and execute righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed."

Again: we may feel contented, if we consider

that our unfavorable positions in life need not check the improvement of our minds or the piety of our hearts; but that we may still worship our God, and love our neighbors, in every state and condition of life.

But some may say, it is easy to preach contentment; but to practice it, "*hic labor, hoc opus est*," this is labor indeed—this is a hard work. Some think their circumstances will not admit of contentment. My case, says one, is truly vexatious, and one that admits not of contentment. I was once rich—possessed of large estates—surrounded with all the comforts, enjoyments and luxuries of life; but by the frauds of enemies, the deception of pretended friends, and other ill winds, I have lost and been robbed of all, of everything I possessed, and am in abject poverty—and how can I be patient and contented? To such an one I would say, Consider patient, pious Job, who was similarly situated, though worse, for he was personally, sorely afflicted; yet he could say with perfect resignation, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be his holy name!" Consider also the blessed Saviour, "who had not where to lay his head." Besides, let me ask you, what have you lost? Was not the

whole comparatively nothing, and vanity? was there any intrinsic virtue or value in it? could it save one soul from death? could it fill one heart with love to God? could it make atonement for one sin, waft one soul to heaven, or furnish any good thing that will last for ever? But if your troubles have had a salutary effect upon your mind and heart—if you have learnt to put your trust in God and not in men—if you are really poor, without repining, are not your losses more than made up? are you not a gainer? are you not now receiving the choice blessing of Jesus, and his rich promise of an interest in the kingdom of heaven? for he said, “Blessed are the poor who repine not, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.” And is not this worth more than all you have lost? Were you possessed of the whole world, had you a legal title to the whole, would you not quit-claim it all for an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven? And this is yours, if you love God and keep his commandments. Cease, then, your murmurings, and be content.

The orphans come, and say, Our case is a hard one. Our kind parents have been taken from us—we are left destitute, without a supporter, protector, and guide of our youth—how

can we feel resigned and contented? By considering that you have an almighty, all-benevolent Parent in heaven, who is able, ready, and willing to do for you more than any earthly parent could do—who hath declared himself to be the Father of the fatherless. Put your trust in him, and be contented—be happy.

The bereaved mother says, My sorrows are greater than I can bear with patience. I have been bereaved of my two darling children—one three years old, the other almost two: they were the delight of my eyes, the joy of my heart—sweet cherubs! my comfort, my all! But they are not; and I, whither shall I go? Go to God, dear mother, who can give you richer blessings than he has taken from you. Consider that your children were his—that he only lent them to you—that he had a right to take them home whenever he pleased, and that he took them for their good, for their happiness. Had they lived, they might have been liable to great sufferings, to be led away and enticed by the vanities, deceitfulness, and corruptions of the world—might have ruined their own souls, and brought deeper distress and anguish upon their fond mother. Look, also, upon the blessed Saviour, who, when on earth,

took little children into his arms and blessed them; and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven!" With an eye of faith, see your dear children embraced in the arms of his love, receiving his divine blessing, which is life evermore; and see them also under the immediate protection and kind care of that Almighty Parent who "is love!" Meditate upon these things, and be reconciled, be contented, be happy!

Now hear the sighs of the disconsolate widow. No sorrows like my sorrows—no griefs like mine! How can I feel quiet and contented? I had a kind, an affectionate, an indulgent, faithful husband; he was my friend, my supporter, my guide, my all: but he is taken from me; I am left alone, in solitude, and tears of anguish; and how can I remain contented and serene? I will tell you how you may learn contentment. By considering that it was for your good, as well as for his happiness, that your husband was removed before you—to teach you that you should not place your supreme affections on any mortal man, though to you the best, most beloved and noble, but upon the ever-living God, who is the Giver of every good gift—who is the almighty Friend of all



men—who loves you, and will do you more good than any earthly husband could—who is always ready and willing to give good things to those who ask him. And you will learn to be content, when you consider that this Friend has declared himself to be “the widow’s God and Judge;” and that his Son, the blessed Saviour, will be your spiritual husband. If, then, you loved your husband, murmur not that he is taken to happiness and glory before you; but rather rejoice with joy unspeakable, in the glorious hope that ere long you may be called to meet him, and to unite with him, and the innumerable hosts of heaven, in rapturous songs of praise and thanksgiving to “Him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!”

But we must not forget the bereaved husband, who is exclaiming, in the agony of affliction, “The hand of God hath touched me; lover and friend hath he put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness!” Yes, I had a beloved, an amiable, a virtuous, a faithful companion of my bosom. She was my comfort in affliction, my best physician in sickness—in health, the enlivener of my joys, the sweetener of my pleasures, the faithful aid and assistant

in all my affairs, and the brightener of all my hopes—she was everything to me that heart could wish; but she is removed far from me, “into darkness.” And I—where can I go for consolation, for joy, or even for contentment? And now, my brother, as you have no earthly, special object of love and attachment, if you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and put your trust in him, and love your neighbors as yourself, and do good to all, you may learn to be contented and happy—your losses on earth will be gains in heaven.

Finally, brethren, we may all learn contentment, by considering that we are, directly or indirectly, entirely dependent upon our heavenly Father for all we possess, enjoy, or hope for—that we have of ourselves no right to claim of him anything more than, or different from what he is pleased to give us—that it is our natural and required duty to be content with the allotments of his holy and wise providence; and if we should be tempted to complain or murmur about our state and condition in life, we ought constantly to hear the voice of the Lord, saying to us, “Be still, and know that I am God”—a gracious and merciful **God**, who careth for you.

## ESPECIAL AND USEFUL DUTIES

### OF THE RICH.

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“ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. who giveth us all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.” Tim. vi. 17, 18.

All men have some duties to perform—some more and some less. The rich, especially, have some duties to perform which are not required of the poor. But who are rich in this world, in worldly goods? Not only those who are possessed of very large, immense property—who are millionarians, or nearly so, but all who possess, or have the means of acquiring, much more than is necessary for their own comfortable support and convenience. To all such the charge of the apostle is applicable.

It will not be modest or commendable in me to undertake to dictate to the rich what is their duty; but I will refer them to the directions and instructions of the inspired Apostle Paul,

and to the Word of God, and the dictates of all nature and reason. Paul has substantially set forth all the duties of the rich; but we may comment a little upon him. He directed Timothy to "charge them that are rich," as in our text, "that they be not high-minded"—that they be not haughty, proud, boasting of their wealth, as if they had acquired it entirely by their own skill and power, without the aid or blessing of God—and that they should not trust in the uncertain riches of this world, which are, at best, evanescent, and liable to be taken from them by thieves, robbers, and various evil-disposed persons and causes; or to be destroyed by tornadoes, fires, earthquakes, and other natural, inevitable causes of destruction and annihilation. But they were to trust in the living God, in the divine riches, which God alone can bestow and perpetuate, to be richly enjoyed.

Moreover, there is something for the rich to do. They are charged to do good—to be rich in good works—to clothe the naked, feed the hungry—to supply, as much as they can, the suffering wants of all—to "help those that have none to help them"—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and especially to cause the Gospel to be preached to the poor, and to be spread throughout the world.

These are some of the duties that are required of the rich; and they may fully learn all their duties by listening to the teaching of the whole Word of God, and the dictates of nature, reason and common sense.

And those rich persons who faithfully perform their whole duty are the life of the inhabited world—they are one of the best of God's blessings upon earth; and they should be respected, esteemed and loved, as the true friends of men and the faithful servants of God.

But as to those very rich persons who do not use their superabundant property agreeably to their required duty—who, instead of supplying the wants of the poor and needy, neglect and oppress them—who, instead of doing good, do much injury in the world—who, instead of causing the Gospel to be preached to the poor and others, reject it and treat it with contempt—who do not use any of their riches for the benefit and comfort of their fellow-men or for the glory of God, but hoard it up, or appropriate it to ambitious, miserly purposes, merely to gratify their ambition, or their own craving, unholy dispositions, without distributing for any good works—if there be any such rich persons, (and I hope there *can* be but very few, if



any,) towards them I can have no very kind feelings—I can hardly “God-speed them;” and if they were in trouble, or some “torments,” I should hesitate about sending a Lazarus to comfort or warn them, but would only pray them to repent and reform, and to bring forth works meet for repentance and reformation.

I have not the wisdom of Solomon, nor of a great many other men; but I think I have enough to say, that if all the intelligent creatures of God upon the earth performed all their duties faithfully, there would be no necessity for men to die to obtain heaven, for they might have it here, with God’s blessing. But we must be assured that the omniscient, all-wise God has planned and ordered all things for the best, and that his creatures should fully, thankfully acquiesce in his holy will and pleasure.

## CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT.

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“ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—John, xiii. 34.

Well did Christ call this commandment truly a new commandment ; for before that time there was no such command fully given ; there was no such love as Christ's love known or thought of. And how can we know what and how great this love was ? We may learn it from the fact, that he willingly left his seat at the right hand of God on the throne, and, for a time, all the joys and glories of heaven ; and, in obedience to his Father's holy will, came down to this world, here to teach, and instruct, and to bless sinful, offending men ; here to be abused, despised, and to suffer and die on the cross, to procure the salvation and everlasting life of sinners ! O, love divine ! all other love, except the love of God, compared with *this*, is cold and worthless.

Such was this amazing, ineffable love, that all Christians of all sects or denominations must be convinced, that this commandment of love one to another, as Christ had loved them, and which was first given to the disciples, is of infinite importance, and should be received and obeyed by all men in every age. It should be faithfully and fully kept by all, especially by all denominations of professed Christians, for it is applicable and was intended to be binding upon them all. All professed Christians of all or different denominations, are as truly required to love one another, as they are to love those of their own denomination, though the love may be in a different or less degree.

And what will all those who obey this command of Christ, receive? They will receive the approbation of the perfect Lawgiver; and they will also receive full, infallible proof to all men, that they are the true disciples of Christ. For Christ has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And is not this of infinite importance to you, to possess this evidence, which will be satisfactorily received in the highest court in the universe, by the

greatest, most perfect judge that ever sat on any judgment-seat?

Besides, if you seek only temporal good, blessings and happiness, a general obedience by all men to this commandment will produce not only a little—a handfull—but a *world-full* of joy and happiness! There would be no contention, no fighting, no theft, no robbery, no iniquity, no evil of any kind; but everything in the world would be good, would be peaceful, would be satisfactory, would be delightful!

Love one to another, or brotherly love, is the best bond of society in this world, and it leads to a higher, an infinite love, the supreme love of God and of Christ; for if “one loves not his brother whom he has seen and enjoyed, how can he love God, whom he has not seen, and whose whole goodness is in some measure unsearchable, and past finding out.”

THE END.









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